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## P R E F A C E .

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THIS volume, like that which preceded it a year ago, though entirely composed of selections from the Princeton Review, is not made up by the Conductors of that valuable publication.

It is with no common satisfaction that the collector of these tracts presents as many as seven from the pen of the late distinguished Professor Dod. They are the articles on Capital Punishment, Phrenology, the Vestiges of Creation, Analytical Geometry, and Oxford Architecture, together with the Reviews of Mr. Finney and Dr. Beecher. These Essays are the best extant testimonial to the genius and cultivation of their lamented author.

The article on Hebrew Concordances is also a memorial of departed intellect ; being a production of the late Professor Nordheimer.

Several of the remaining Essays in this volume awakened extraordinary interest at the time of their publication : among these may be named those on Slavery and Abolition, and that on the Baptist Translation of the Bible.

The rapid sale of the former volume makes us secure in regard to that which is now offered.

*New York, April 15, 1847.*

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## ESSAY X.

# SLAVERY.\*

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EVERY one must be sensible that a very great change has, within a few years, been produced in the feelings, if not in the opinions of the public in relation to slavery. It is not long since the acknowledgment was frequent at the south, and universal at the north, that it was a great evil. It was spoken of in the slave-holding states, as a sad inheritance fixed upon them by the cupidity of the mother-country in spite of their repeated remonstrances. The known sentiments of Jefferson were reiterated again and again in every part of his native state; and some of the strongest denunciations of this evil, and some of the most ardent aspirations for deliverance from it ever uttered in the country, were pronounced, but a few years since, in the legislature of Virginia. A proposition to call a convention, with the purpose of so amending the constitution of the state as to admit of the general emancipation of the slaves, is said to have failed in the legislature of Kentucky by a single vote.† The sentiments of the northern states had long since been clearly expressed, by the abolition of slavery within their limits. That the same opinions and the same feelings continued to prevail among them, may be inferred, not only from the absence of all evidence to the contrary, but from various decisive indications of a positive character. In the year 1828 a resolution was passed by an almost unanimous vote in the legislature of Pennsylvania, instructing their Senators in Congress to endeavour to procure the passage of a law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia. In 1829 a similar resolution was adopted by the assembly of New York. In 1828 a petition to this effect was presented to Congress, signed by one thousand inhabitants of the District itself; and the House of Representatives instructed the proper committee, in 1829, to inquire into the expediency of

\* Originally published in 1836, in review of "Slavery." By William E. Channing.

† It is probable that many reasons combined to make a convention desirable to those who voted for it. But to get rid of slavery, was said to be one of the most prominent.

the measure.\* How altered is the present state of the country! Instead of lamentations and acknowledgments, we hear from the south the strongest language of justification. And at the north, opposition to the proceedings of the anti-slavery societies seems to be rapidly producing a public feeling in favour of slavery itself. The freedom of discussion, the liberty of the press, and the right of assembling for consultation have in some cases been assailed, and in others trampled under foot by popular violence. What has produced this lamentable change? No doubt, many circumstances have combined in its production. We think, however, that all impartial observers must acknowledge, that by far the most prominent cause is the conduct of the abolitionists. They indeed naturally resist this imputation; and endeavour to show its injustice by appealing to the fact that their opinions of slavery have been ascertained and expressed by many of the best men of former times. This appeal, however, is by no means satisfactory. The evil in question has been produced by no mere expression of opinion. Had the abolitionists confined themselves to their professed object, and endeavoured to effect their purpose by arguments addressed to the understandings and consciences of their fellow-citizens, no man could have any reason to complain. Under ordinary circumstances, such arguments as those presented on this subject in Dr. Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science*, and in Dr. Channing's recent publication, would have been received with respect and kindness in every part of the country. We make this assertion, because the same sentiments, more offensive, and less ably urged, have heretofore been thus received.

It is not by argument that the abolitionists have produced the present unhappy excitement. Argument has not been the characteristic of their publications. Denunciations of slaveholding, as man-stealing, robbery, piracy, and worse than murder; consequent vituperation of slaveholders as knowingly guilty of the worst of crimes; passionate appeals to the feelings of the inhabitants of the northern states; gross exaggerations of the moral and physical condition of the slaves, have formed the staple of their addresses to the public. We do not mean to say that there has been no calm and Christian discussion of the subject. We mean merely to state what has, to the best of our knowledge, been the predominant character of the anti-slavery publications. There is one circumstance which renders the error and guilt of this course of conduct chargeable, in a great measure, on the abolitionists as a body, and even upon those of their number who have pursued a different course. We refer to the fact that they have upheld the most extreme publications, and made common cause with the most reckless declaimers. The wildest ravings of the *Liberator* have been constantly lauded; agents have been commissioned whose great distinction was a talent for eloquent vituperation; coincidence of opinion as to the single point of immediate emancipation has

\* Jay's Inquiry, pp. 157, 161.

been sufficient to unite men of the most discordant character. There is in this conduct such a strange want of adaptation between the means and the end which they profess to have in view, as to stagger the faith of most persons in the sincerity of their professions, who do not consider the extremes to which even good men may be carried, when they allow one subject to take exclusive possession of their minds. We do not doubt their sincerity; but we marvel at their delusion. They seem to have been led by the mere impulse of feeling, and a blind imitation of their predecessors in England, to a course of measures, which, though rational under one set of circumstances, is the height of insatiation under another. The English abolitionists addressed themselves to a community, which, though it owned no slaves, had the power to abolish slavery, and was therefore responsible for its continuance. Their object was to rouse that community to immediate action. For this purpose they addressed themselves to the feelings of the people; they portrayed in the strongest colours the misery of the slaves; they dilated on the gratuitous crime of which England was guilty in perpetuating slavery, and did all they could to excite the passions of the public. This was the very course most likely to succeed, and it did succeed. Suppose, however, that the British parliament had no power over the subject; that it rested entirely with the colonial Assemblies to decide whether slavery should be abolished or not. Does any man believe the abolitionists would have gained their object? Did they in fact make converts of the planters? Did they even pretend that such was their design? Every one knows that their conduct produced a state of almost frantic excitement in the West India Island; that so far from the public feeling in England producing a moral impression upon the planters favourable to the condition of the slaves, its effect was directly the reverse. It excited them to drive away the missionaries, to tear down the chapels, to manifest a determination to rivet still more firmly the chains on their helpless captives, and to resist to the utmost all attempts for their emancipation or even improvement. All this was natural, though it was all, under the circumstances, of no avail, except to rouse the spirit of the mother country, and to endanger the result of the experiment of emancipation, by exasperating the feelings of the slaves. Precisely similar has been the result of the efforts of the American abolitionists as it regarded the slaveholders of America. They have produced a state of alarming exasperation at the south, injurious to the slave and dangerous to the country, while they have failed to enlist the feelings of the north. This failure has resulted, not so much from diversity of opinion on the abstract question of slavery, or from want of sympathy among northern men in the cause of human rights, as from the fact, that the common sense of the public has been shocked by the incongruity and folly of hoping to effect the abolition of slavery in one country, by addressing the people of another. We do not expect to abolish des-

potism in Russia, by getting up indignation-meetings in New York. Yet for all the purposes of legislation on this subject, Russia is not more a foreign country to us than South Carolina. The idea of inducing the southern slaveholder to emancipate his slaves by denunciation, is about as rational as to expect the sovereigns of Europe to grant free institutions, by calling them tyrants and robbers. Could we bend our denunciations of despotism among the subjects of those monarchs, and rouse the people to a sense of their wrongs and a determination to redress them, there would be some prospect of success. But our northern abolitionists disclaim with great earnestness all intention of allowing their appeals to reach the ears of the slaves. It is therefore not to be wondered at, that the course pursued by the anti-slavery societies should produce exasperation at the south, without conciliating sympathy at the north. The impolicy of their conduct is so obvious, that men who agree with them as to all their leading principles, not only stand aloof from their measures, but unhesitatingly condemn their conduct. This is the case with Dr. Channing. Although his book was written rather to repress the feeling of opposition to these societies, than to encourage it, yet he fully admits the justice of the principal charges brought against them. We extract a few passages on this subject. "The abolitionists have done wrong, I believe; nor is their wrong to be winked at, because done fanatically, or with good intentions; for how much mischief may be wrought with good designs! They have fallen into the common error of enthusiasts, that of exaggerating their object, of feeling as if no evil existed but that which they opposed, and as if no guilt could be compared with that of countenancing and upholding it. The tone of their newspapers, as far as I have seen them, has often been fierce, bitter, and abusive." P. 133. "Another objection to their movements is, that they have sought to accomplish their object by a system of agitation; that is, by a system of affiliated societies gathered, and held together, and extended, by passionate eloquence." "The abolitionists might have formed an association; but it should have been an elective one. Men of strong principles, judiciousness, sobriety, should have been carefully sought as members. Much good might have been accomplished by the co-operation of such philanthropists. Instead of this, the abolitionists sent forth their orators, some of them transported with fiery zeal to sound the alarm against slavery through the land, to gather together young and old, pupils from schools, females hardly arrived at years of discretion, the ignorant, the excitable, the impetuous, and to organize these into associations for the battle against oppression. Very unhappily they preached their doctrine to the coloured people, and collected these into societies. To this mixed and excitable multitude, minute, heart-rending descriptions of slavery were given in the piercing tones of passion; and slaveholders were held up as monsters of cruelty and crime." P. 136. "The abolitionists often speak of Luther's vehemence as a model to future reformers. But who,

that has read history, does not know that Luther's reformation was accompanied by tremendous miseries and crimes, and that its progress was soon arrested? and is there not reason to fear, that the fierce, bitter, persecuting spirit, which he breathed into the work, not only tarnished its glory, but limited its power? One great principle which we should lay down as immovably true, is, that if a good work cannot be carried on by the calm, self-controlled, benevolent spirit of Christianity, then the time for doing it has not come. God asks not the aid of our vices. He can overrule them for good, but they are not the chosen instruments of human happiness." P. 136. "The adoption of the common system of agitation by the abolitionists has proved signally unsuccessful. From the beginning it created alarm in the considerate, and strengthened the sympathies of the free states with the slaveholder. It made converts of a few individuals, but alienated multitudes. Its influence at the south has been evil without mixture. It has stirred up bitter passions and a fierce fanaticism, which have shut every ear and every heart against its arguments and persuasions. These effects are the more to be deplored, because the hope of freedom to the slave lies chiefly in the dispositions of his master. The abolitionist indeed proposed to convert the slaveholders; and for this end he approached them with vituperation and exhausted on them the vocabulary of abuse! And he has reaped as he sowed." P. 142.

Unmixed good or evil, however, in such a world as ours, is a very rare thing. Though the course pursued by the abolitionists has produced a great preponderance of mischief, it may incidentally occasion no little good. It has rendered it incumbent on every man to endeavour to obtain, and, as far as he can, to communicate definite opinions and correct principles on the whole subject. The community are very apt to sink down into indifference to a state of things of long continuance, and to content themselves with vague impressions as to right and wrong on important points, when there is no call for immediate action. From this state the abolitionists have effectually roused the public mind. The subject of slavery is no longer one on which men are allowed to be of no mind at all. The question is brought up before all our public bodies, civil and religious. Almost every ecclesiastical society has in some way been called to express an opinion on the subject; and these calls are constantly repeated. Under these circumstances, it is the duty of all in their appropriate sphere, to seek for truth, and to utter it in love.

"The first question," says Dr. Channing, "to be proposed by a rational being, is not what is profitable, but what is right. Duty must be primary, prominent, most conspicuous, among the objects of human thought and pursuit. If we cast it down from its supremacy, if we inquire first for our interests and then for our duties, we shall certainly err. We can never see the right clearly and fully, but by making it our first concern. . . . Right is the

supreme good, and includes all other goods. In seeking and adhering to it, we secure our true and only happiness. All prosperity, not founded on it, is built on sand. If human affairs are controlled, as we believe, by almighty rectitude and impartial goodness, then to hope for happiness from wrong doing is as insane as to seek health and prosperity by rebelling against the laws of nature, by sowing our seed on the ocean, or making poison our common food. There is but one unfailing good; and that is, fidelity to the everlasting law written on the heart, and re-written and republished in God's word.

"Whoever places this faith in the everlasting law of rectitude must, of course, regard the question of slavery, first and chiefly, as a moral question. All other considerations will weigh little with him compared with its moral character and moral influences. The following remarks, therefore, are designed to aid the reader in forming a just moral judgment of slavery. Great truths, inalienable rights, everlasting duties, these will form the chief subjects of this discussion. There are times when the assertion of great principles is the best service a man can render society. The present is a moment of bewildering excitement, when men's minds are stormed and darkened by strong passions and fierce conflicts; and also a moment of absorbing worldliness, when the moral law is made to bow to expediency, and its high and strict requirements are decried or dismissed as metaphysical abstractions, or impracticable theories. At such a season to utter great principles without passion, and in the spirit of unfeigned and universal good will, and to engrave them deeply and durably on men's minds, is to do more for the world than to open mines of wealth, or to frame the most successful schemes of policy."

No man can refuse assent to these principles. The great question, therefore, in relation to slavery is, what is right? What are the moral principles which should control our opinions and conduct in regard to it? Before attempting an answer to this question, it is proper to remark, that we recognise no authoritative rule of truth and duty but the word of God. Plausible as may be the arguments deduced from general principles to prove a thing to be true or false, right and wrong, there is almost always room for doubt and honest diversity of opinion. Clear as we may think the arguments against despotism, there ever have been thousands of enlightened and good men, who honestly believe it to be of all forms of government the best and most acceptable to God. Unless we can approach the consciences of men, clothed with some more imposing authority than that of our own opinions and arguments, we shall gain little permanent influence. Men are too nearly upon a par as to their powers of reasoning and ability to discover truth, to make the conclusions of one mind an authoritative rule for others. It is our object, therefore, not to discuss the subject of slavery upon abstract principles, but to ascertain the scriptural rule of judgment and conduct in relation to it. We do

not intend to enter upon any minute or extended examination of scriptural passages, because all that we wish to assume, as to the meaning of the word of God, is so generally admitted as to render the laboured proof of it unnecessary.

It is on all hands acknowledged that at the time of the advent of Jesus Christ, slavery in its worst forms prevailed over the whole world. The Saviour found it around him in Judea; the apostles met with it in Asia, Greece and Italy. How did they treat it? Not by the denunciation of slave-holding as necessarily and universally sinful. Not by declaring that all slaveholders were men-stealers and robbers, and consequently to be excluded from the church and the kingdom of heaven. Not by insisting on immediate emancipation. Not by appeals to the passions of men on the evils of slavery, or by the adoption of a system of universal agitation. On the contrary, it was by teaching the true nature, dignity, equality and destiny of men; by inculcating the principles of justice and love; and by leaving these principles to produce their legitimate effects in meliorating the condition of all classes of society. We need not stop to prove that such was the course pursued by our Saviour and his apostles, because the fact is in general acknowledged, and various reasons are assigned by the abolitionists and others, to account for it. The subject is hardly alluded to by Christ in any of his personal instructions. The apostles refer to it, not to pronounce upon it as a question of morals, but to prescribe the relative duties of masters and slaves. They caution those slaves who have believing or Christian masters, not to despise them because they were on a perfect religious equality with them, but to consider the fact that their masters were their brethren, as an additional reason for obedience. It is remarkable that there is not even an exhortation to masters to liberate their slaves, much less is it urged as an imperative and immediate duty. They are commanded to be kind, merciful and just; and to remember that they have a Master in heaven. Paul represents this relation as of comparatively little account. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant (or slave), care not for it; though, should the opportunity of freedom be presented, embrace it. These external relations, however, are of little importance, for every Christian is a freeman in the highest and best sense of the word, and at the same time is under the strongest bonds to Christ." 1 Cor. vii., 20-22. It is not worth while to shut our eyes to these facts. They will remain, whether we refuse to see them and be instructed by them or not. If we are wiser, better, more courageous than Christ and his apostles, let us say so; but it will do no good, under a paroxysm of benevolence, to attempt to tear the Bible to pieces, or to extort, by violent exegesis, a meaning foreign to its obvious sense. Whatever inferences may be fairly deducible from the fact, the fact itself cannot be denied that Christ and his inspired followers did treat the subject of slavery in the

manner stated above. This being the case, we ought carefully to consider their conduct in this respect, and inquire what lessons that conduct should teach us.

We think no one will deny that the plan adopted by the Saviour and his immediate followers must be the correct plan, and therefore obligatory upon us, unless it can be shown that their circumstances were so different from ours, as to make the rule of duty different in the two cases. The obligation to point out and establish this difference rests of course upon those who have adopted a course diametrically the reverse of that which Christ pursued. They have not acquitted themselves of this obligation. They do not seem to have felt it necessary to reconcile their conduct with his; nor does it appear to have occurred to them, that their violent denunciation of slaveholding and of slaveholders is an indirect reflection on his wisdom, virtue, or courage. If the present course of the abolitionists is right, then the course of Christ and the apostles was wrong. For the circumstances of the two cases are, as far as we can see, in all essential particulars the same. They appeared as teachers of morality and religion, not as politicians. The same is the fact with our abolitionists. They found slavery authorized by the laws of the land. So do we. They were called upon to receive into the communion of the Christian Church, both slave-owners and slaves. So are we. They instructed these different classes of persons as to their respective duties. So do we. Where then is the difference between the two cases? If we are right in insisting that slaveholding is one of the greatest of all sins; that it should be immediately and universally abandoned as a condition of church communion, or admission into heaven; how comes it that Christ and his apostles did not pursue the same course? We see no way of escape from the conclusion that the conduct of the modern abolitionists, being directly opposed to that of the authors of our religion, must be wrong, and ought to be modified or abandoned.

An equally obvious deduction from the fact above referred to, is, that slaveholding is not necessarily sinful. The assumption of the contrary is the great reason why the modern abolitionists have adopted their peculiar course. They argue thus: slaveholding is under all circumstances sinful; it must, therefore, under all circumstances, and at all hazards, be immediately abandoned. This reasoning is perfectly conclusive. If there is error anywhere, it is in the premises and not in the deduction. It requires no argument to show that sin ought to be at once abandoned. Everything, therefore, is conceded which the abolitionists need require, when it is granted that slaveholding is in itself a crime. But how can this assumption be reconciled with the conduct of Christ and the apostles? Did they shut their eyes to the enormities of a great offence against God and man? Did they temporize with a heinous evil because it was common and popular? Did they abstain from even exhorting masters to emancipate their slaves, though an imperative

duty, from fear of consequences? Did they admit the perpetrators of the greatest crimes to the Christian communion? Who will undertake to charge the blessed Redeemer and his inspired followers with such connivance at sin; and such fellowship with iniquity? Were drunkards, murderers, liars, and adulterers, thus treated? Were they passed over without even an exhortation to forsake their sins? Were they recognised as Christians? It cannot be that slaveholding belongs to the same category with these crimes; and to assert the contrary is to assert that Christ is the minister of sin.

This is a point of so much importance, lying as it does at the very foundation of the whole subject, that it deserves to be attentively considered. The grand mistake, as we apprehend, of those who maintain that slaveholding is itself a crime, is, that they do not discriminate between slaveholding in itself considered, and its accessories at any particular time or place. Because masters may treat their slaves unjustly, or governments make oppressive laws in relation to them, is no more a valid argument against the lawfulness of slaveholding, than the abuse of parental authority, or the unjust political laws of certain states, is an argument against the lawfulness of the parental relation, or of civil government. This confusion of points so widely distinct, appears to us to run through almost all the popular publications on slavery, and to vitiate their arguments. Mr. Jay, for example, quotes the second article of the constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which declares that "slaveholding is a heinous crime in the sight of God," and then, to justify this declaration, makes large citations from the laws of the several southern States, to show what the system of slavery is in this country, and concludes by saying, "This is the system which the American Anti-Slavery Society declares to be sinful, and ought therefore to be immediately abolished." There is, however, no necessary connexion between his premises and conclusion. We may admit all those laws which forbid the instruction of slaves; which interfere with their marital or parental rights; which subject them to the insults and oppression of the whites, to be in the highest degree unjust, without at all admitting that slaveholding itself is a crime. Slavery may exist without any one of these concomitants. In pronouncing on the moral character of an act, it is obviously necessary to have a clear idea of what it is; yet how few of those who denounce slavery have any well defined conception of its nature! They have a confused idea of chains and whips, of degradation and misery, of ignorance and vice, and to this complex conception they apply the name slavery, and denounce it as the aggregate of all moral and physical evil. Do such persons suppose that slavery as it existed in the family of Abraham, was such as their imaginations thus picture to themselves? Might not that patriarch have had men purchased with his silver, who were well clothed, well instructed, well compensated for their labour, and in all respects treated with parental kindness? Neither inadequate

remuneration, physical discomfort, intellectual ignorance, moral degradation, is essential to the condition of a slave. Yet if all these ideas are removed from the commonly received notion of slavery, how little will remain. All the ideas which necessarily enter into the definition of slavery are deprivation of personal liberty, obligation of service at the discretion of another, and the transferable character of the authority and claim of service of the master.\* The manner in which men are brought into this condition, its continuance, and the means adopted for securing the authority and claim of masters, are all incidental and variable. They may be reasonable or unreasonable, just or unjust, at different times and places. The question, therefore, which the abolitionists have undertaken to decide, is, not whether the laws enacted in the slaveholding states in relation to this subject are just or not; but whether slaveholding, in itself considered, is a crime. The confusion of these two points has not only brought the abolitionists into conflict with the scriptures, but it has, as a necessary consequence, prevented their gaining the confidence of the north, or power over the conscience of the south. When southern Christians are told that they are guilty of a heinous crime, worse than piracy, robbery or murder, because they hold slaves, though they know that Christ and his apostles never denounced slaveholding as a crime, never called upon men to renounce it as a condition of admission into the church, they are shocked and offended, without being convinced. They are sure that their accusers cannot be wiser or better than their divine Master, and their consciences are untouched by denunciations which they know, if well founded, must affect not them only, but the authors of the religion of the Bible.

The argument from the conduct of Christ and his immediate followers seems to us decisive on the point, that slaveholding, in itself considered, is not a crime. Let us see how this argument has been answered. In the able "Address to the Presbyterians of Kentucky, proposing a plan for the instruction and emancipation of their slaves, by a committee of the synod of Kentucky," there is a strong and extended argument to prove the sinfulness of slavery *as it exists among us*, to which we have little to object. When, however, the distinguished drafter of that address comes to answer the objection, "God's word sanctions slavery, and it cannot therefore be sinful," he forgets the essential limitation of the proposition which he had undertaken to establish, and proceeds to prove that the Bible condemns slaveholding, and not merely the kind or system of slavery which prevails in this country. The argument drawn from the scriptures, he says, needs no elaborate reply. If the Bible sanctions slavery, it sanctioned the kind of slavery which then prevailed; the atrocious system which authorized masters to

\* Paley's definition is still more simple: "I define," he says, "slavery to be an obligation to labour for the benefit of the master, without the contract or consent of the servant." Moral Philosophy, book iii., ch. 3.

starve their slaves, to torture them, to beat them, to put them to death, and to throw them into their fish ponds. And he justly asks, whether a man could insult the God of heaven worse than by saying he does not disapprove of such a system? Dr. Channing presents strongly the same view, and says, that an infidel would be labouring in his vocation in asserting that the Bible does not condemn slavery. These gentlemen, however, are far too clear-sighted not to discover, on a moment's reflection, that they have allowed their benevolent feelings to blind them to the real point at issue. No one denies that the Bible condemns all injustice, cruelty, oppression, and violence. And just so far as the laws then existing authorized these crimes the Bible condemned them. But what stronger argument can be presented to prove that the sacred writers did not regard slaveholding as in itself sinful, than that while they condemn all unjust or unkind treatment (even threatening) on the part of masters towards their slaves, they did not condemn slavery itself? While they required the master to treat his slave according to the law of love, they did not command him to set him free. The very atrocity, therefore, of the system which then prevailed, instead of weakening the argument, gives it tenfold strength. Then, if ever, when the institution was so fearfully abused, we might expect to hear the interpreters of the divine will saying that a system which leads to such results is the concentrated essence of all crimes, and must be instantly abandoned on pain of eternal condemnation. This, however, they did not say, and we cannot now force them to say it. They treated the subject precisely as they did the cruel despotism of the Roman emperors. The licentiousness, the injustice, the rapine and murders of those wicked men, they condemned with the full force of divine authority; but the mere extent of their power, though so liable to abuse, they left unnoticed.

Another answer to the argument in question is, that "The New Testament does condemn slaveholding, *as practised among us*, in the most explicit terms furnished by the language in which the sacred penmen wrote." This assertion is supported by saying that God has condemned slavery, because he has specified the parts which compose it and condemned them, one by one, in the most ample and unequivocal form.\* It is to be remarked that the saving clause, "*slaveholding as it exists among us*," is introduced into the statement, though it seems to be lost sight of in the illustration and confirmation of it which follow. We readily admit, that if God does condemn all the parts of which slavery consists, he condemns slavery itself. But the drafter of the address has made no attempt to prove that this is actually done in the sacred scriptures. That many of the attributes of the system, as established by law in this country, are condemned, is indeed very plain; but that slaveholding in itself is condemned, has not been and cannot be proved. The writer, indeed, says, "The Greek language had a word cor-

\* Address, &c., p. 20.

responding exactly, in signification, with our word *servant*, but it had none which answered precisely to our term *slave*. How then was an apostle writing in Greek, to condemn our slavery? How can we expect to find in scripture, the words '*slavery is sinful*,' when the language in which it is written contained no term which expressed the meaning of our word *slavery*?" Does the gentleman mean to say the Greek language could not express the idea that slaveholding is sinful? Could not the apostles have communicated the thought that it was the duty of masters to set their slaves free? Were they obliged from paucity of words to admit slaveholders into the Church? We have no doubt the writer himself could, with all ease, pen a declaration in the Greek language void of all ambiguity, proclaiming freedom to every slave upon earth, and denouncing the vengeance of heaven upon every man who dared to hold a fellow creature in bondage. It is not words we want. We want evidence that the sacred writers taught that it was incumbent on every slaveholder, as a matter of duty, to emancipate his slaves (which no Roman or Greek law forbade), and that his refusing to do so was a heinous crime in the sight of God. The Greek language must be poor indeed if it cannot convey such ideas.

Another answer is given by Dr. Channing. "Slavery," he says, "in the age of the apostle, had so penetrated society, was so intimately interwoven with it, and the materials of servile war were so abundant, that a religion, preaching freedom to its victims, would have armed against itself the whole power of the State? Of consequence, Paul did not assail it. He satisfied himself with spreading principles, which, however slowly, could not but work its destruction." To the same effect, Dr. Wayland says, "The gospel was designed, not for one race or one time, but for all men and for all times. It looked not at the abolition of this form of evil for that age alone, but for its universal abolition. Hence the important object of its author was to gain it a lodgment in every part of the known world; so that, by its universal diffusion among all classes of society, it might quietly and peacefully modify and subdue the evil passions of men; and thus, without violence, work a revolution in the whole mass of mankind. In this manner alone could its object, a universal moral revolution, be accomplished. For if it had forbidden the *evil* without subduing the *principle*, if it had proclaimed the unlawfulness of slavery, and taught slaves to *resist* the oppression of their masters, it would instantly have arrayed the two parties in deadly hostility throughout the civilized world; its announcement would have been the signal of a servile war; and the very name of the Christian religion would have been forgotten amidst the agitations of universal bloodshed. The fact, under these circumstances, that the gospel does not forbid slavery, affords no reason to suppose that it does not mean to prohibit it, much less does it afford ground for belief that Jesus Christ intended to authorize it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Elements of Moral Science, p. 225.

Before considering the force of this reasoning, it may be well to notice one or two important admissions contained in these extracts. First, then, it is admitted by these distinguished moralists, that the apostles did not preach a religion proclaiming freedom to slaves; that Paul did not assail slavery; that the gospel did not proclaim the unlawfulness of slavholding; it did not forbid it. This is going the whole length that we have gone in our statement of the conduct of Christ and his apostles. Secondly, these writers admit that the course adopted by the authors of our religion was the only wise and proper one. Paul satisfied himself, says Dr. Channing, with spreading principles, which, however slowly, could not but work its destruction. Dr. Wayland says, that if the apostles had pursued the opposite plan of denouncing slavery as a crime, the Christian religion would have been ruined: its very name would have been forgotten. Then how can the course of the modern abolitionists, under circumstances so nearly similar, or even that of these reverend gentlemen themselves, be right? Why do not they content themselves with doing what Christ and his apostles did? Why must they proclaim the unlawfulness of slavery? Is human nature so much altered, that a course which would have produced universal bloodshed, and led to the very destruction of the Christian religion in one age, is wise and Christian in another?

Let us, however, consider the force of the argument as stated above. It amounts to this. Christ and his apostles thought slaveholding a great crime, but they abstained from saying so for fear of the consequences. The very statement of the argument, in its naked form, is its refutation. These holy men did not refrain from condemning sin from a regard to the consequences. They did not hesitate to array against the religion which they taught, the strongest passions of men. Nor did they content themselves with denouncing the general principles of evil; they condemned its special manifestations. They did not simply forbid intemperate sensual indulgence, and leave it to their hearers to decide what did or what did not come under that name. They declared that no fornicator, no adulterer, no drunkard, could be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. They did not hesitate, even, when a little band, a hundred and twenty souls, to place themselves in direct and irreconcilable opposition to the whole polity, civil and religious, of the Jewish state. It will hardly be maintained that slavery was at that time more intimately interwoven with the institutions of society, than idolatry was. It entered into the arrangements of every family; of every city and province, and of the whole Roman empire. The emperor was the Pontifex Maximus; every department of the state, civil and military, was pervaded by it. It was so united with the fabric of the government that it could not be removed without effecting a revolution in all its parts. The apostles knew this. They knew that to denounce polytheism was to array against them the whole power

of the state. Their divine Master had distinctly apprised them of the result. He told them that it would set the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; and that a man's enemies should be those of his own household. He said that he came not to bring peace but a sword, and that such would be the opposition to his followers, that whosoever killed them, would think he did God service. Yet in view of these certain consequences the apostles did denounce idolatry, not merely in principle, but by name. The result was precisely what Christ had foretold. The Romans, tolerant of every other religion, bent the whole force of their wisdom and arms to extirpate Christianity. The scenes of bloodshed which century after century followed the introduction of the gospel, did not induce the followers of Christ to keep back or modify the truth. They adhered to their declaration that idolatry was a heinous crime. And they were right. We expect similar conduct of our missionaries. We do not expect them to refrain from denouncing the institutions of the heathen as sinful, because they are popular, or intimately interwoven with society. The Jesuits, who adopted this plan, forfeited the confidence of Christendom, without making converts of the heathen. It is, therefore, perfectly evident that the authors of our religion were not withheld by these considerations, from declaring slavery to be unlawful. If they did abstain from this declaration, as is admitted, it must have been because they did not consider it as in itself a crime. No other solution of their conduct is consistent with their truth or fidelity.

Another answer to the argument from scripture is given by Dr. Channing and others. It is said that it proves too much; that it makes the Bible sanction despotism, even the despotism of Nero. Our reply to this objection shall be very brief. We have already pointed out the fallacy of confounding slaveholding itself with the particular system of slavery prevalent at the time of Christ, and shown that the recognition of slaveholders as Christians, though irreconcilable with the assumption that slavery is a heinous crime, gives no manner of sanction to the atrocious laws and customs of that age in relation to that subject. Because the apostles admitted the masters of slaves to the communion of the church, it would be a strange inference that they would have given this testimony to the Christian character of the master who oppressed, starved, or murdered his slaves. Such a master would have been rejected as an oppressor, or murderer, however, not as a slaveholder. In like manner, the declaration that government is an ordinance of God, that magistrates are to be obeyed within the sphere of their lawful authority; that resistance to them, when in the exercise of that authority, is sinful; gives no sanction to the oppression of the Roman emperors, or to the petty vexations of provincial officers. The argument urged from scripture in favour of passive submission, is not so

exactly parallel with the argument for slavery, as Dr. Channing supposes.\* They agree in some points, but they differ in others. The former is founded upon a false interpretation of Rom. xiii., 1-3; it supposes that passage to mean what it does not mean, whereas the latter is founded upon the sense which Dr. C. and other opponents of slavery admit to be the true sense. This must be allowed to alter the case materially. Again, the argument for the lawfulness of slaveholding is not founded on the mere injunction, "Slaves, obey your masters," analogous to the command, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," but on the fact that the apostles did not condemn slavery; that they did not require emancipation; and that they recognised slaveholders as Christian brethren. To make Dr. Channing's argument of any force, it must be shown that Paul not only enjoined obedience to a despotic monarch, but that he recognised Nero as a Christian. When this is done, then we shall admit that our argument is fairly met, and that it is just as true that he sanctioned the conduct of Nero as that he acknowledged the lawfulness of slavery.

The two cases, however, are analogous as to one important point. The fact that Paul enjoins obedience under a despotic government, is a valid argument to prove, not that he sanctioned the conduct of the reigning Roman emperor, but that he did not consider the possession of despotic power a crime. The argument of Dr. C. would be far stronger, and the two cases more exactly parallel, had one of the emperors become a penitent believer during the apostolic age, and been admitted to the Christian church by inspired men, notwithstanding the fact that he retained his office and authority. But even without this latter decisive circumstance, we acknowledge that the mere holding of despotic power is proved not to be a crime by the fact that the apostles enjoined obedience to those who exercised it. Thus far the arguments are analogous; and they prove that both political despotism and domestic slavery belong in morals to the *adiaphora*, to things indifferent. They may be expedient or inexpedient, right or wrong, according to circumstances. Belonging to the same class, they should be treated in the same way. Neither is it to be denounced as necessarily sinful, and to be abolished immediately under all circumstances and at all hazards. Both should be left to the operation of those general principles of the gospel, which have peacefully meliorated political institutions, and destroyed domestic slavery throughout the greater part of Christendom.

The truth on this subject is so obvious that it sometimes escapes

\* It need hardly be remarked that the command to obey magistrates, as given in Rom. xiii., 1-3, is subject to the limitation stated above. They are to be obeyed as magistrates; precisely as parents are to be obeyed as parents, husbands as husbands. The command of obedience is expressed as generally, in the last two cases, as in the first. A magistrate beyond the limits of his lawful authority (whatever that may be) has, in virtue of this text, no more claim to obedience, than a parent who, on the strength of the passage, "Children, obey your parents in all things," should command his son to obey him as a monarch or a pope.

unconsciously from the lips of the most strenuous abolitionists. Mr. Birney says, "He would have retained the power and authority of an emperor; yet his oppressions, his cruelties, would have ceased; the very temper that prompted them would have been suppressed; his power would have been put forth for good and not for evil."\* Here everything is conceded. The possession of despotic power is thus admitted not to be a crime, even when it extends over millions of men, and subjects their lives as well as their property and services to the will of an individual. What becomes then of the arguments and denunciations of slave-holding, which is despotism on a small scale? Would Mr. Birney continue in the deliberate practice of a crime worse than robbery, piracy, or murder? When he penned the above sentiment, he must have seen that neither by the law of God nor of reason is it necessarily sinful to sustain the relation of master over our fellow creatures; that if this unlimited authority be used for the good of those over whom it extends and for the glory of God, its possessor may be one of the best and most useful of men. It is the abuse of this power for base and selfish purposes which constitutes criminality, and not its simple possession. He may say that the tendency to abuse absolute power is so great that it ought never to be confided to the hands of men. This, as a general rule, is no doubt true, and establishes the inexpediency of all despotic governments whether for the state or the family. But it leaves the morality of the question just where it was, and where it was seen to be, when Mr. Birney said he could with a good conscience be a Roman emperor, i. e., the master of millions of slaves.

The consideration of the Old Testament economy leads us to the same conclusion on this subject. It is not denied that slavery was tolerated among the ancient people of God. Abraham had servants in his family who were "bought with his money," Gen. xvii., 13. "Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men servants, and maid servants, and gave them unto Abraham." Moses, finding this institution among the Hebrews and all surrounding nations, did not abolish it. He enacted laws directing how slaves were to be treated, on what conditions they were to be liberated, under what circumstances they might, and might not, be sold; he recognises the distinction between slaves and hired servants (Deut. xv., 18); he speaks of the way by which these bondmen might be procured; as by war, by purchase, by the right of creditorship, by the sentence of a judge, by birth; but not by seizing on those who were free, an offence punished by death.† The fact that the Mosaic institutions recognised the lawfulness of slavery is a point too plain to need proof, and is almost universally admitted.

\* Quoted by Pres. Young, p. 45, of the Address, &c.

† On the manner in which slaves were acquired, compare Deut. xx., 14; xxi., 10, 11; Ex. xxii., 3; Neh. v., 4, 5; Gen. xiv., 14; xv., 3; xvii., 23; Num. xxxi., 18, 35; Deut. xxv., 44, 46.

As to the manner in which they were to be treated, see Lev. xxv., 39-53; Ex. xx., 10; xxii., 2-9; Deut. xxv., 4-6, &c., &c.

Our argument from this acknowledged fact is, that if God allowed slavery to exist, if he directed how slaves might be lawfully acquired, and how they were to be treated, it is in vain to contend that slaveholding is a sin; and yet profess reverence for the scriptures. Every one must feel that if perjury, murder, or idolatry, had been thus authorized, it would bring the Mosaic institutions into conflict with the eternal principles of morals, and that our faith in the divine origin of one or the other must be given up.

Dr. Channing says, of this argument also, that it proves too much. "If usages sanctioned under the Old Testament, and not forbidden under the New, are right, then our moral code will undergo a sad deterioration. Polygamy was allowed to the Israelites, was the practice of the holiest men, and was common and licensed in the age of the apostles. But the apostles nowhere condemn it, nor was the renunciation of it made an essential condition of admission into the Christian Church." To this we answer, that so far as polygamy and divorce were permitted under the old dispensation, they were lawful, and became so by that permission; and they ceased to be lawful when the permission was withdrawn, and a new law given. That Christ did give a new law on this subject is abundantly evident.\* With regard to divorce, it is as explicit as language can make it; and with regard to polygamy it is so plain as to have secured the assent of every portion of the Christian Church in all ages. The very fact that there has been no diversity of opinion or practice among Christians with regard to polygamy, is itself decisive evidence that the will of Christ was clearly revealed on the subject. The temptation to continue the practice was as strong, both from the passions of men, and the sanction of prior ages, as in regard to slavery. Yet we find no traces of the toleration of polygamy in the Christian Church, though slavery long continued to prevail. There is no evidence that the apostles admitted to the fellowship of Christians, those who were guilty of this infraction of the law of marriage. It is indeed possible that in cases where the converts had already more than one wife, the connexion was not broken off. It is evident this must have occasioned great evil. It would lead to the breaking up of families, the separation of parents and children, as well as husbands and wives. Under these circumstances the connexion may have been allowed to continue. It is, however, very doubtful whether even this was permitted. It is remarkable that among the numerous cases of

\* "The words of Christ (Matt. xix., 9) may be construed by an easy implication to prohibit polygamy: for if 'whoever putteth away his wife, and *marrieth* another, committeth adultery,' he who *marrieth* another *without* putting away the first, is no less guilty of adultery: because the adultery does not consist in the repudiation of the first wife (for, however unjust and cruel that may be, it is not adultery), but in entering into a second marriage during the legal existence and obligation of the first. The several passages in St. Paul's writings, which speak of marriage, always suppose it to signify the union of one man with one woman."—Paley's Moral Phil., book iii., chap. 6.

conscience connected with marriage, submitted to the apostles, this never occurs.

Dr. Channing uses language much too strong when he says that polygamy was common and licensed in the days of the apostles. It was contrary both to Roman and Grecian laws and usages, until the most degenerate periods of the history of those nations. It was very far from being customary among the Jews, though it might have been allowed. It is probable that it was, therefore, comparatively extremely rare in the apostolic age. This accounts for the fact that scarcely any notice is taken of the practice in the New Testament. Wherever marriage is spoken of it seems to be taken for granted, as a well understood fact, that it was a contract for life between one man and one woman; compare Rom. vii., 2, 3; 1 Cor. vii., 1, 2, 39. It is further to be remarked on this subject that marriage is a positive institution. If God had ordained that every man should have two or more wives instead of one, polygamy would have been lawful. But slaveholding is denounced as a *malum in se*; as essentially unjust and wicked. This being the case, it could at no period of the world receive the divine sanction, much less could it have continued in the Christian Church, under the direction of inspired men, when there was nothing to prevent its immediate abolition. The answer then of Dr. Channing is unsatisfactory; first, because polygamy does not belong to the same category in morals as that to which slaveholding is affirmed to belong; and secondly, because it was so plainly prohibited by Christ and his apostles as to secure the assent of all Christians in all ages of the Church.

It is, however, argued that slavery must be sinful because it interferes with the inalienable rights of men. We have already remarked that slavery, in itself considered, is a state of bondage, and nothing more. It is the condition of an individual who is deprived of his personal liberty, and is obliged to labour for another, who has the right to transfer this claim of service at pleasure. That this condition involves the loss of many of the rights which are commonly and properly called natural, because belonging to men, as men, is readily admitted. It is, however, incumbent on those who maintain that slavery is, on this account, necessarily sinful, to show that it is criminal, under all circumstances, to deprive any set of men of a portion of their natural rights. That this broad proposition cannot be maintained, is evident. The very constitution of society supposes the forfeiture of a greater or less amount of these rights, according to its peculiar organization. That it is not only the privilege, but the duty of men to live together in a regularly organized society, is evident from the nature which God has given us; from the impossibility of every man living by and for himself, and from the express declarations of the word of God. The object of the formation of society is the promotion of human virtue and happiness; and the form in which it should be organized, is that which will best secure the

attainment of this object. As, however, the condition of men is so very various, it is impossible that the same form should be equally conducive to happiness and virtue under all circumstances. No one form, therefore, is prescribed in the Bible, or is universally obligatory. The question which form is, under given circumstances, to be adopted, is one of great practical difficulty, and must be left to the decision of those who have the power to decide, on their own responsibility. The question, however, does not depend upon the degree in which these several forms may encroach on the natural rights of men. In the patriarchal age, the most natural, the most feasible, and perhaps the most beneficial form of government was by the head of the family. His power by the law of nature, and the necessity of the case, extended without any other limit than the general principles of morals, over his children, and in the absence of other regular authority, would not terminate when the children arrived at a particular age, but be continued during life. He was the natural umpire between his adult offspring—he was their lawgiver and leader. His authority would naturally extend over his more remote descendants, as they continued to increase, and on his death, might devolve on the next oldest of the family. There is surely nothing in this mode of constituting society which is necessarily immoral. If found to be conducive to the general good, it might be indefinitely continued. It would not suffice to render its abrogation obligatory, to say that all men are born free and equal; that the youth of twenty-one had as good a right to have a voice in the affairs of the family as the aged patriarch; that the right of self-government is indefeasible, &c. Unless it could be shown that the great end of society was not attainable by this mode of organization, and that it would be more securely promoted by some other, it would be an immorality to require or to effect the change. And if a change became, in the course of time, obviously desirable, its nature and extent would be questions to be determined by the peculiar circumstances of the case, and not by the rule of abstract rights. Under some circumstances it might be requisite to confine the legislative power to a single individual; under others to the hands of a few; and under others to commit it to the whole community. It would be absurd to maintain, on the ground of the natural equality of men, that a horde of ignorant and vicious savages should be organized as a pure democracy, if experience taught that such a form of government was destructive to themselves and others. These different modes of constituting civil society are not necessarily either just or unjust, but become the one or the other according to circumstances; and their morality is not determined by the degree in which they encroach upon the natural rights of men, but on the degree in which they promote or retard the progress of human happiness and virtue. In this country we believe that the general good requires us to deprive the whole female sex of the right of self-government. They have no voice in the formation of the

laws which dispose of their persons and property. When married, we despoil them almost entirely of a legal existence, and deny them some of the most essential rights of property. We treat all minors much in the same way, depriving them of many personal and almost all political rights, and that too though they may be far more competent to exercise them aright than many adults. We, moreover, decide that a majority of one may make laws for the whole community, no matter whether the numerical majority have more wisdom or virtue than the minority or not. Our plea for all this is, that the good of the whole is thereby most effectually promoted. This plea, if made out, justifies the case. In England and France they believe that the good of the whole requires that the right of governing, instead of being restricted to all adult males, as we arbitrarily determine, should be confined to that portion of the male population who hold a given amount of property. In Prussia and Russia, they believe with equal confidence, that public security and happiness demand that all power should be in the hands of the king. If they are right in their opinion, they are right in their practice. The principle that social and political organizations are designed for the general good, of course requires they should be allowed to change, as the progress of society may demand. It is very possible that the feudal system may have been well adapted to the state of Europe in the middle ages. The change in the condition of the world, however, has gradually obliterated almost all its features. The villain has become the independent farmer; the lord of the manor, the simple landlord; and the sovereign liege, in whom, according to the fiction of the system, the fee of the whole country vested, has become a constitutional monarch. It may be that another series of changes may convert the tenant into an owner, the lord into a rich commoner, and the monarch into a president. Though these changes have resulted in giving the people the enjoyment of a larger amount of their rights than they formerly possessed, it is not hence to be inferred that they ought centuries ago to have been introduced suddenly or by violence. Christianity "operates as alterative." It was never designed to tear up the institutions of society by the roots. It produces equality not by prostrating trees of all sizes to the ground, but by securing to all the opportunity of growing, and by causing all to grow, until the original disparity is no longer perceptible. All attempts, by human wisdom, to frame society, of a sudden, after a pattern cut by a rule of abstract rights, have failed; and whether they had failed or not, they can never be urged as a matter of moral obligation. It is not enough therefore, in order to prove the sinfulness of slaveholding, to show that it interferes with the natural rights of a portion of the community. It is in this respect analogous to all other social institutions. They are all of them encroachments on human rights, from the freest democracy to the most absolute despotism.

It is further to be remarked that all these rights suppose corres-

pending duties, and where there is an incompetence for the duty, the claim to exercise the right ceases. No man can justly claim the exercise of any right to the injury of the community of which he is a member. It is because females and minors are judged (though for different reasons) incompetent to the proper discharge of the duties of citizenship, that they are deprived of the right of suffrage. It is on the same principle that a large portion of the inhabitants of France and England are deprived of the same privilege. As it is acknowledged that the slaves may be justly deprived of political rights on the ground of their incompetency to exercise them without injury to the community, it must be admitted, by parity of reason, that they may be justly deprived of personal freedom, if incompetent to exercise it with safety to society. If this is so, then slavery is a question of circumstances, and not a *malum in se*. It must be borne in mind that the object of these remarks is not to prove that the American, the British, or the Russian form of society is expedient or otherwise; much less to show that the slaves in this country are actually unfit for freedom, but simply to prove that the mere fact that slaveholding interferes with natural rights, is not enough to justify the conclusion that it is necessarily and universally sinful.

Another very common and plausible argument on this subject is, that a man cannot be made a matter of property. He cannot be degraded into a brute or chattel without the grossest violation of duty and propriety; and that as slavery confers this right of property in human beings it must, from its very nature, be a crime. We acknowledge the correctness of the principle on which this argument is founded, but deny that it is applicable to the case in hand. We admit that it is not only an enormity, but an impossibility, that a man should be made a thing, as distinguished from a rational and moral being. It is not within the compass of human law to alter the nature of God's creatures. A man must be regarded and treated as a rational being even in his greatest degradation. That he is, in some countries and under some institutions, deprived of many of the rights and privileges of such a being, does not alter his nature. He must be viewed as a man under the most atrocious system of slavery that ever existed. Men do not arraign and try on evidence, and punish on conviction either things or brutes. Yet slaves are under a regular system of laws which, however unjust they may be, recognise their character as accountable beings. When it is inferred from the fact that the slave is called the property of his master, that he is thereby degraded from his rank as a human being, the argument rests on the vagueness of the term *property*. Property is the right of possession and use, and must of necessity vary according to the nature of the objects to which it attaches. A man has property in his wife, in his children, in his domestic animals, in his fields and in his forests. That is, he has the right to the possession and use of these several objects according to their nature. He has no more right to use a brute as a log

of wood, in virtue of the right of property, than he has to use a man as a brute. There are general principles of rectitude obligatory on all men, which require them to treat all the creatures of God according to the nature which he has given them. The man who should burn his horse because it was his property, would find no justification in that plea either before God or man. When therefore it is said that one man is the property of another, it can only mean that the one has a right to use the other *as a man*, but not as a brute or as a thing. He has no right to treat him as he may lawfully treat his ox, or a tree. He can convert his person to no use to which a human being may not, by the laws of God and nature, be properly applied. When this idea of property comes to be analysed, it is found to be nothing more than a claim of service either for life or for a term of years. This claim is transferable, and is of the nature of property, and is consequently liable for the debts of the owner, and subject to his disposal by will or otherwise. It is probable that the slave is called the property of his master in the statute books, for the same reason that children are called the servants of their parents, or that wives are said to be the same person with their husbands and to have no separate existence of their own. These are mere technicalities designed to facilitate certain legal processes. Calling a child a servant does not alter his relation to his father; and a wife is still a woman, though the courts may rule her out of existence. In like manner where the law declares that the slave shall be deemed and adjudged to be a chattel personal in the hands of his master, it does not alter his nature, nor does it confer on the master any right to use him in a manner inconsistent with that nature. As there are certain moral principles which direct how brutes are to be used by those to whom they belong, so there are fixed principles which determine how a man may be used. These legal enactments, therefore, are not intended to legislate away the nature of the slave as a human being; they serve to facilitate the transfer of the master's claim of service, and to render that claim the more readily liable for his debts. The transfer of authority and claim of service from one master to another, is in principle analogous to transfer of subjects from one sovereign to another. This is a matter of frequent occurrence. By the treaty of Vienna, for example, a large part of the inhabitants of central Europe changed masters. Nearly half of Saxony was transferred to Prussia; Belgium was annexed to Holland. In like manner Louisiana was transferred from France to the United States. In none of these cases were the people consulted. Yet in all a claim of service more or less extended was made over from one power to another. There was a change of masters. The mere transferable character of the master's claim to the slave does not convert the latter into a thing, or degrade him from his rank as human being. Nor does the fact that he is bound to serve for life produce this effect. It is only property in his time for life, instead

of for a term of years. The nature of the relation is not determined by the period of its continuance.

It has, however, been argued that the slave is the property of his master, not only in the sense admitted above, but in the sense assumed in the objection, because his children are under the same obligation of service as the parent. The hereditary character of slavery, however, does not arise out of the idea of the slave as a chattel or thing, a mere matter of property: it depends on the organization of society. In England one man is born a peer, another a commoner; in Russia one is born a noble, another a serf; here one is born a free citizen, another a disfranchised outcast (the free coloured man), and a third a slave. These forms of society, as before remarked, are not necessarily, or in themselves, either just or unjust; but become the one or the other, according to circumstances. Under a state of things in which the best interests of the community would be promoted by the British or Russian organization, they would be just and acceptable to God; but under circumstances in which they would be injurious, they would be unjust. It is absolutely necessary, however, to discriminate between an organization essentially vicious, and one which, being in itself indifferent, may be right or wrong according to circumstances. On the same principle, therefore, that a human being in England is deprived by the mere accident of birth, of the right of suffrage; and in Russia has the small portion of liberty which belongs to a commoner, or the still smaller belonging to a serf; in this country one class is by birth invested with all the rights of citizenship, another (females) is deprived of all political and many personal rights, and a third of even their personal liberty. Whether this organization is right or wrong is not now the question. We are simply showing that the fact that the children of slaves become by birth slaves, is not to be referred to the idea of the master's property in the body and soul of the parent, but results from the form of society, and is analogous to other social institutions, as far as the principle is concerned, that the children take the rank, or the political or social condition of the parent.

We prefer being chargeable with the sin of wearisome repetition, to leaving any room for the misapprehension of our meaning. We, therefore, again remark that we are discussing the mere abstract morality of these forms of social organization, and not their expediency. We have in view the vindication of the character of the inspired writings and inspired men from the charge of having overlooked the blackest of human crimes, and of having recognised the worst of human beings as Christians. We say, therefore, that an institution which deprives a certain portion of the community of their personal liberty, and places them under obligation of service to another portion, is no more necessarily sinful than one which invests an individual with despotic power (such as Mr. Birney would consent to hold); or than one which limits the right of government to a small portion of the people, or restricts

it to the male part of the community. However inexpedient, under certain circumstances, any one of these arrangements may be, they are not necessarily immoral, nor do they become such, from the fact that the accident of birth determines the relation in which one part of the community is to stand to the other. In ancient Egypt, as in modern India, birth decided the position and profession of every individual. One was born a priest, another a merchant, another a labourer, another a soldier. As there must always be these classes, it is no more necessarily immoral to have them all determined by hereditary descent, than it was among the Israelites to have all the officers of religion from generation to generation thus determined; or that birth should determine the individual who is to fill a throne or occupy a seat in parliament.

Again, Dr. Wayland argues, if the right to hold slaves be conceded, "there is of course conceded all other rights necessary to insure its possession. Hence, inasmuch as the slave can be held in this condition only while he remains in the lowest state of mental imbecility, it supposes the master to have the right to control his intellectual development just as far as may be necessary to secure entire subjection."\* He reasons in the same way to show that the religious knowledge and even eternal happiness of the slave, are as a matter of right conceded to the power of the master, if the right of slaveholding is admitted. The utmost force that can be allowed to this argument is, that the right to hold slaves includes the right to exercise all *proper* means to insure its possession. It is in this respect on a par with all other rights of the same kind. The rights of parents to the service of their children, of husbands to the obedience of their wives, of masters over their apprentices, of creditors over their debtors, of rulers over their subjects, all suppose the right to adopt proper means for their secure enjoyment. They, however, give no sanction to the employment of any and every means which cruelty, suspicion, or jealousy, may choose to deem necessary, nor of any which would be productive of greater general evil than the forfeiture of the rights themselves. According to the ancient law even among the Jews, the power of life and death was granted to the parent; we concede only the power of correction. The old law gave the same power to the husband over the wife. The Roman law confided the person and even life of the debtor to the mercy of the creditor. According to the reasoning of Dr. Wayland, all these laws must be sanctioned, if the rights which they were deemed necessary to secure, are acknowledged. It is clear, however, that the most unrighteous means may be adopted to secure a proper end, under the plea of necessity. The justice of the plea must be made out on its own grounds, and cannot be assumed on the mere admission of the propriety of the end aimed at. Whether the slaves of this country

\* Elements of Moral Science, p. 221.

may be safely admitted to the enjoyments of personal liberty, is a matter of dispute: but that they could not, consistently with the public welfare, be intrusted with the exercise of political power, is on all hands admitted. It is, then, the acknowledged right of the state to govern them by laws in the formation of which they have no voice. But it is the universal plea of the depositaries of irresponsible power, sustained too by almost universal experience, that men can be brought to submit to political despotism only by being kept in ignorance and poverty. Dr. Wayland, then, if he concedes the right of the state to legislate for the slaves, must, according to his own reasoning, acknowledge the right to adopt all the means necessary for the security of this irresponsible power, and of consequence that the state has the right to keep the blacks in the lowest state of degradation. If he denies the validity of this argument in favour of political despotism, he must renounce his own against the lawfulness of domestic slavery. Dr. Wayland himself would admit the right of the Emperor of Russia to exercise a degree of power over his half civilized subjects, which could not be maintained over an enlightened people, though he would be loath to acknowledge his right to adopt all the means necessary to keep them in their present condition. The acknowledgment, therefore, of the right to hold slaves, does not involve the acknowledgment of the right to adopt measures adapted and intended to perpetuate their present mental and physical degradation.

We have entered much more at length into the abstract argument on this subject than we intended. It was our purpose to confine our remarks to the scriptural view of the question. But the consideration of the objections derived from the general principles of morals, rendered it necessary to enlarge our plan. As it appears to us too clear to admit of either denial or doubt, that the scriptures do sanction slaveholding; that under the old dispensation it was expressly permitted by divine command, and under the New Testament is nowhere forbidden or denounced, but on the contrary, acknowledged to be consistent with the Christian character and profession (that is, consistent with justice, mercy, holiness, love to God and love to man), to declare it to be a heinous crime, is a direct impeachment of the word of God. We, therefore, felt it incumbent upon us to prove, that the sacred scriptures are not in conflict with the first principles of morals; that what they sanction is not the blackest and basest of all offences in the sight of God. To do this, it was necessary to show what slavery is, to distinguish between the relation itself, and the various cruel or unjust laws which may be made either to bring men into it, or to secure its continuance; to show that it no more follows from the admission that the scriptures sanction the right of slaveholding, that they, therefore, sanction all the oppressive slave-laws of any community, than it follows from the admission of the propriety of parental, conjugal, or political relations, that they sanction all the

conflicting codes by which these relations have at different periods and in different countries been regulated.

We have had another motive in the preparation of this article. The assumption that slaveholding is itself a crime, is not only an error, but it is an error fraught with evil consequences. It not merely brings its advocates into conflict with the scriptures, but it does much to retard the progress of freedom; it embitters and divides the members of the community, and distracts the Christian church. Its operation in retarding the progress of freedom is obvious and manifold. In the first place, it directs the battery of the enemies of slavery to the wrong point. It might be easy for them to establish the injustice or cruelty of certain slave-laws; where it is not in their power to establish the sinfulness of slavery itself. They, therefore, waste their strength. Nor is this the least evil. They promote the cause of their opponents. If they do not discriminate between slaveholding and the slave-laws, it gives the slaveholder not merely an excuse but an occasion and a reason for making no such distinction. He is thus led to feel the same conviction in the propriety of the one that he does in that of the other. His mind and conscience may be satisfied that the mere act of holding slaves is not a crime. This is the point, however, to which the abolitionist directs his attention. He examines their arguments, and becomes convinced of their inconclusiveness, and is not only thus rendered impervious to their attacks, but is exasperated by what he considers their unmerited abuse. In the meantime his attention is withdrawn from far more important points; the manner in which he treats his slaves, and the laws enacted for the security of his possession. These are points on which his judgment might be much more really convinced of error, and his conscience of sin.

In the second place, besides fortifying the position and strengthening the purpose of the slaveholder, the error in question divides and weakens the friends of freedom. To secure any valuable result by public sentiment, you must satisfy the public mind and rouse the public conscience. Their passions had better be allowed to rest in peace. As the anti-slavery societies declare it to be their object to convince their fellow-citizens that slaveholding is necessarily a heinous crime in the sight of God, we consider their attempt as desperate, so long as the Bible is regarded as the rule of right and wrong. They can hardly secure either the verdict of the public mind or of the public conscience in behalf of this proposition. Their success hitherto has not been very encouraging, and is certainly not very flattering, if Dr. Channing's account of the class of persons to whom they have principally addressed their arguments, is correct. The tendency of their exertions, be their success great or small, is not to unite, but to divide. They do not carry the judgment or conscience of the people with them. They form, therefore, a class by themselves. Thousands who earnestly desire to see the south convinced of the injustice and

consequent impolicy of their slave-laws, and under this conviction, of their own accord, adopting those principles which the Bible enjoins, and which tend to produce universal intelligence, virtue, liberty and equality, without violence and sudden change, and which thus secure private and public prosperity, stand aloof from the abolitionists, not merely because they disapprove of their spirit and mode of action, but because they do not admit their fundamental principle.

In the third place, the error in question prevents the adoption of the most effectual means of extinguishing the evil. These means are not the opinions or feelings of the non-slaveholding states, nor the denunciation of the holders of slaves, but the improvement, intellectual and moral, of the slaves themselves. Slavery has but two natural and peaceful modes of death. The one is the increase of the slave population until it reaches the point of being unproductive. When the number of slaves becomes so great that the master cannot profitably employ them, he manumits them in self-defence. This point would probably have been reached long ago, in many of the southern states, had not the boundless extent of the south-western sections of the Union presented a constant demand for the surplus hands. Many planters in Virginia and Maryland, whose principles or feelings revolt at the idea of selling their slaves to the south, find that their servants are gradually reducing them to poverty, by consuming more than they produce. The number, however, of slaveholders who entertain these scruples is comparatively small. And as the demand for slave labor in the still unoccupied regions of the extreme south-west is so great, and is likely to be so long continued, it is hopeless to think of slavery dying out by becoming a public burden. The other natural and peaceful mode of extinction, is the gradual elevation of the slaves in knowledge, virtue, and property, to the point at which it is no longer desirable or possible to keep them in bondage. Their chains thus gradually relax, until they fall off entirely. It is in this way that Christianity has abolished both political and domestic bondage, whenever it has had free scope. It enjoins a fair compensation for labour; it insists on the moral and intellectual improvement of all classes of men; it condemns all infractions of marital or parental rights; in short, it requires not only that free scope should be allowed to human improvement, but that all suitable means should be employed for the attainment of that end. The feudal system, as before remarked, has in a great measure been thus outgrown in all the European states. The third estate, formerly hardly recognised as having an existence, is becoming the controlling power in most of those ancient communities. The gradual improvement of the people rendered it impossible and undesirable to deprive them of their just share in the government. And it is precisely in those countries where this improvement is most advanced that the feudal institutions are the most completely obliterated, and the general prosperity the greatest. In like manner the gospel method of extinguishing slavery is by improving the condition of the slave.

The grand question is, How is this to be done? The abolitionist answers, by immediate emancipation. Perhaps he is right, perhaps he is wrong; but whether right or wrong, it is not the practical question for the north. Among a community which have the power to emancipate, it would be perfectly proper to urge that measure on the ground of its being the best means of promoting the great object of the advancement of human happiness and virtue. But the error of the abolitionists is, that they urge this measure from the wrong quarter, and upon the wrong ground. They insist upon immediate abolition because slavery is a sin, and its extinction a duty. If, however, slaveholding is not in itself sinful, its abolition is not necessarily a duty. The question of duty depends upon the effects of the measure, about which men may honestly differ. Those who believe that it would advance the general good, are bound to promote it; while those who believe the reverse, are equally bound to resist it. The abolitionists, by insisting upon one means of improvement, and that on untenable ground, are most effectually working against the adoption of any other means, by destroying the disposition and power to employ them. It is in this way that the error to which we have referred throughout this article, is operating most disadvantageously for the cause of human liberty and happiness. The fact is, that the great duty of the south is not emancipation, but improvement. The former is obligatory only as a means to an end, and therefore, only under circumstances where it would promote that end. In like manner the great duty of despotic governments is not the immediate granting of free institutions, but the constant and assiduous cultivation of the best interests (knowledge, virtue and happiness) of the people. Where free institutions would conduce to this object, they should be granted, and just so far and so fast as this becomes apparent.

Again, the opinion that slaveholding is itself a crime must operate to produce the disunion of the states, and the division of all ecclesiastical societies in this country. The feelings of the people may be excited violently for a time, but the transport soon passes away. But if the conscience is enlisted in the cause, and becomes the controlling principle, the alienation between the north and the south must become permanent. The opposition to southern institutions will be calm, constant, and unappeasable. Just so far as this opinion operates, it will lead those who entertain it to submit to any sacrifices to carry it out, and give it effect. We shall become two nations in feeling, which must soon render us two nations in fact. With regard to the church its operation will be much more summary. If slaveholding is a heinous crime, slaveholders must be excluded from the church. Several of our judicatories have already taken this position. Should the General Assembly adopt it, the church is, *ipso facto*, divided. If the opinion in question is correct, it must be maintained, whatever are the consequences. We are no advocates of expediency in morals. We

have no more right to teach error in order to prevent evil, than we have a right to do evil to promote good. On the other hand, if the opinion is incorrect, its evil consequences render it a duty to prove and exhibit its unsoundness. It is under the deep impression that the primary assumption of the abolitionists is an error, that its adoption tends to the distraction of the country, and the division of the church; and that it will lead to the longer continuance and greater severity of slavery, that we have felt constrained to do what little we could towards its correction.

We have little apprehension that any one can so far mistake our object, or the purport of our remarks, as to suppose either that we regard slavery as a desirable institution, or that we approve of the slave laws of the southern states. So far from this being the case, the extinction of slavery, and the melioration of those laws, are as sincerely desired by us, as by any of the abolitionists. The question is not about the continuance of slavery, and of the present system, but about the proper method of effecting the removal of the evil. We maintain, that it is not by denouncing slaveholding as a sin, or by universal agitation at the north, but by the improvement of the slaves. It no more follows that because the master has a right to hold slaves, he has a right to keep them in a state of degradation in order to perpetuate their bondage, than that the Emperor of Russia has a right to keep his subjects in ignorance and poverty, in order to secure the permanence and quiet possession of his power. We hold it to be the grand principle of the Gospel, that every man is bound to promote the moral, intellectual and physical improvement of his fellow men. Their civil or political relations are in themselves matters of indifference. Monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, domestic slavery, are right or wrong as they are, for the time being, conducive to this great end, or the reverse. They are not objects to which the improvement of society is to be sacrificed; nor are they strait-jackets to be placed upon the public body to prevent its free development. We think, therefore, that the true method for Christians to treat this subject, is to follow the example of Christ and his apostles in relation both to despotism and slavery. Let them enforce as moral duties the great principles of justice and mercy, and all the specific commands and precepts of the scriptures. If any set of men have servants, bond or free, to whom they refuse a proper compensation for their labour, they violate a moral duty and an express command of scripture. What that compensation should be, depends on a variety of circumstances. In some cases the slaveholder would be glad to compound for the support of his slaves by giving the third or half of the proceeds of his estate. Yet this at the north would be regarded as a full remuneration for the mere labour of production. Under other circumstances, however, a mere support would be very inadequate compensation; and when inadequate, it is unjust. If the compensation be more than a support, the surplus is the property of the labourer, and cannot morally, whatever the laws

may say, be taken from him. The right to accumulate property is an incident to the right of reward for labour. And we believe there are few slaveholding countries in which the right is not practically acknowledged, since we hear so frequently of slaves purchasing their own freedom. It is very common for a certain moderate task\* to be assigned as a day's work, which may be regarded as the compensation rendered by the slave for his support. The residue of the day is at his own disposal, and may be employed for his own profit. We are not now, however, concerned about details. The principle that "the labourer is worthy of his hire" and should enjoy it, is a plain principle of morals and command of the Bible, and cannot be violated with impunity.

Again, if any man has servants or others whom he forbids to marry, or whom he separates after marriage, he breaks as clearly a revealed law as any written on the pages of inspiration, or on the human heart. If he interferes unnecessarily with the authority of parents over their children, he again brings himself into collision with his Maker. If any man has under his charge children, apprentices, servants, or slaves, and does not teach them, or cause them to be taught the will of God; if he deliberately opposes their intellectual, moral, or religious improvement, he makes himself a transgressor. That many of the laws of the slaveholding states are opposed to these simple principles of morals, we fully believe; and we do not doubt that they are sinful and ought to be rescinded. If it be asked what would be the consequence of thus acting on the principles of the gospel, of following the example and obeying the precepts of Christ, we answer, the gradual elevation of the slaves in intelligence, virtue and wealth; the peaceable and speedy extinction of slavery; the improvement in general prosperity of all classes of society, and the consequent increase in the sum of human happiness and virtue. This has been the result of acting on these principles in all past ages; and just in proportion as they have been faithfully observed. The degradation of most eastern nations, and of Italy, Spain, and Ireland, are not more striking examples of the consequences of their violation, than Scotland, England, and the non-slaveholding States are of the benefits of their being even imperfectly obeyed. Men cannot alter the laws of God. It would be as easy for them to arrest the action of the force of gravity as to prevent the systematic violation of the principles of morals being productive of evil.

Besides the two methods mentioned above, in which slavery dies a natural and easy death, there are two others by which, as history teaches us, it may be brought to an end. The one is by the non-slaveholders, in virtue of their authority in the state to which the slaves and their masters belonged, passing laws for its extinction. Of this, the northern states and Great Britain are examples. The

\* We heard the late Dr. Wisner, after his long visit to the south, say, that the usual task of a slave in South Carolina and Georgia was about the third of a day's work for a northern labourer.

other is by servile insurrections. The former of these two methods is of course out of the question, as it regards most of the southern states; for in almost all of them the slave-owners have the legislative power in their own hands. The south, therefore, has to choose between emancipation by the silent and holy influence of the gospel, securing the elevation of the slaves to the stature and character of freemen, or to abide the issue of a long continued conflict against the laws of God. That the issue will be disastrous there can be no doubt. But whether it will come in the form of a desolating servile insurrection, or in some other shape, it is not for us to say. The choice, however, is between rapidly increasing millions of human beings educated under moral and religious restraints, and attached to the soil by the proceeds of their own labour, or hordes of unenlightened barbarians. If the south deliberately keep these millions in this state of degradation, they must prepare themselves for the natural consequences, whatever they may be.

It may be objected that if the slaves are allowed so to improve as to become freemen, the next step in their progress is that they should become citizens. We admit that it is so. The feudal serf first became a tenant, then a proprietor invested with political power. This is the natural progress of society, and it should be allowed thus freely to expand itself, or it will work its own destruction. If a tree is not allowed to grow erect and in its natural shape, it will become crooked, knotted and worthless, but grow it must. This objection would not be considered of any force, if the slaves in this country were not of a different race from their masters. Still they are men; their colour does not place them beyond the operation of the principles of the gospel, or from under the protection of God. We cannot too frequently remember, that it is our province to do right, it is God's to overrule results.\* Let then the north remember that they are bound to follow the example of Christ in the manner of treating slavery, and the south, that they are bound to follow the precepts of Christ in their manner of treating their slaves. If both parties follow the Saviour of men, both will contribute to the promotion of human excellence and happiness, and both will have reason to rejoice in the result.

\* If the fact that the master and slave belong to different races, precludes the possibility of their living together on equal terms, the inference is, not that the one has a right to oppress the other, but that they should separate. Whether this should be done by dividing the land between them and giving rise to distinct communities, or by the removal of the inferior class on just and wise conditions, it is not for us to say. We have undertaken only to express an opinion as to the manner in which the Bible directs those who look to it for guidance to treat this difficult subject, and not to trace out a plan to provide for ulterior results. It is for this reason we have said nothing of African colonization; though we regard it as one of the noblest enterprises of modern benevolence.

## ESSAY XI.

### ABOLITIONISM.\*

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USAGE often gives a comprehensive word a limited sense. If, in our day, and in this country, you ask a man whether he is an abolitionist, he will promptly answer no, though he may believe with Jefferson that slavery is the greatest curse that can be inflicted on a nation; or with Cassius M. Clay, that it is destructive of industry, the mother of ignorance, opposed to literature, antagonist to the fine arts, destructive of mechanical excellence; that it corrupts the people, retards population and wealth, impoverishes the soil, destroys national wealth, and is incompatible with constitutional liberty. A man may believe and say all this, as many of the wisest and best men of the South believe and openly avow, and yet be no abolitionist. If every man who regards slavery as an evil, and wishes to see it abolished, were an abolitionist, then nine tenths of the people of this country would be abolitionists. What then is an abolitionist? He is a man who holds that slaveholding is a great sin; and consequently that slaveholders should not be admitted to the communion of the church, and that slavery should immediately, under all circumstances, and regardless of all consequences, be abolished. "Slaveholding," says the second article of the American Anti-slavery Society, "is a heinous crime in the sight of God," and "ought therefore to be immediately abolished." "The question," says the Reviewer of Dr. Junkin's pamphlet, "now in process of investigation among American churches, is this, and no other: Are the professed Christians in our respective connex-

\* Originally published in 1844, in review of the following works: 1. "The Integrity of our National Union vs. Abolitionism. An argument from the Bible, in proof of the position; that believing masters ought to be honoured and obeyed by their servants, and tolerated in, not excommunicated from the Church of God, being part of a speech delivered before the Synod of Cincinnati, on the subject of Slavery. September 19th and 20th, 1843. By Rev. George Junkin, D.D., President of Miami University."

2. "The Contrast, or the Bible vs. Abolitionism: an Exegetical Argument. By Rev. William Graham, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian church, Oxford, Ohio."

3. "A Review of the Rev. Dr. Junkin's Synodical Speech, in Defence of American Slavery, with an outline of the Bible argument against Slavery."

4. "Line of Demarcation between the Secular and Spiritual Kingdoms. By the Rev. William Wisner, D.D."

ions who hold their fellow men as slaves, thereby guilty of a sin which demands the cognisance of the church, and after due admonition, the application of discipline?" P. 17. This question abolitionists answer in the affirmative; all other men in the negative. Every party has a character as well as a creed. Whatever it is that holds them together as a party, gives them a common spirit, which again leads to characteristic measures and modes of action. If the bond of union is coincidence of opinion on some great principle in politics, religion or morals, then the characteristic spirit of the party will be determined by the nature of that opinion. If we look at the great parties in England, the Tory, Whig and Radical, we shall see they have each its own character, arising out of their distinctive principles. The Tory desires to see political power confined to the holders of property; the Whigs to the educated classes; the Radicals would have it extended to the whole population without regard to their intellectual or moral condition; and we see amidst the diversity of individual character, arising from a thousand different sources, a common spirit belonging to these several parties, arising from the distinctive principle of each. The correctness of this remark is still more obvious with regard to religious parties; because religious truth has a more direct and powerful influence on the character of men than mere political opinions. We not only see the great divisions of the Christian world, the evangelical, ritual. and rationalistic, exhibiting strongly-marked peculiarities, arising from the radically different views of doctrine which they entertain, but the minute subdivisions of the large classes have each its own distinctive character. It is impossible that the difference between the Calvinist and the evangelical Arminian should not manifest itself both in the state of their hearts and in outward acts. And who can shut his eyes to the influence exerted by the New Divinity, in all its modifications, as it has existed in this country? The spirit of censoriousness, of denunciation, of coarse authoritative dealing, and the whole array of new measures, were the natural fruit of the peculiar doctrines of one class of the advocates of the New Divinity, and especially of their opinion that a change of heart was a change of purpose, which a man could effect as easily as change his route on a journey. If, again, a party is constituted by a particular opinion on any question of morals, its character will depend upon the nature of that opinion. We may take as an illustration of this point the temperance society. The opinion that the use of spirituous liquors was in this age and country of evil tendency, and ought to be discountenanced by a general determination of the friends of temperance to abandon such use, had nothing in it anti-scriptural, nothing malevolent. So long, therefore, as this opinion continued the bond of union of the associated friends of temperance, their spirit was benevolent, and their measures mild. But as soon as the doctrine was embraced that the use of intoxicating liquors was in itself sinful, then poison was infused into the

whole organization. Then every man who drank a glass of wine was a sinner, and was to be made a subject of ecclesiastical discipline. Then the holy Scriptures were put to the torture to make them utter the new doctrine; and those to whose ears this utterance was not sufficiently distinct, made bold hypothetically to denounce them, and to blaspheme the Saviour of the world. Then a spirit of censoriousness, of defamation, and of falsehood, seized upon those in whom the virus had produced its full effect, making their publications an opprobrium and a nuisance.

We have in modern abolitionism another illustration of this same truth. That slavery, like despotism, in its very nature, supposes a barbarous or partially civilized condition of at least one portion of society; that it ought not and cannot, without gross injustice, be rendered permanent; that the means of moral and intellectual culture should be extended to slaves, and to the subjects of despotic governments, and the road of improvement be left open before them, is an opinion which any man may hold, and which we believe is in fact held by ninety-nine hundredths of all the intelligent and good men on the face of the earth. And that opinion may and ought to be made the foundation of wise and appropriate measures for carrying it into effect. But let a man adopt the opinion that slaveholding is "a heinous crime in the sight of God," and what is the result? Then he must regard every slaveholder as a criminal, to be denounced and treated accordingly; no matter how humble, meek, holy, heavenly-minded, just, benevolent, that slaveholder may be; no matter how parental in the treatment of his slaves, how assiduous in their religious improvement, how anxious to secure their preparation for freedom, he is, by the mere fact of holding slaves, proved to be a hypocrite, a malevolent and wicked man. Now such a judgment cannot be held without perverting the moral sense of the man who holds it. He must force himself to call evil good and good evil. The exhibition of Christian character, which ought to command confidence and affection, and in every healthful mind does command them, must excite in the mind poisoned by that false opinion disgust and hatred. A holy slaveholder is in his view as much a contradiction as a holy murderer; and he cannot therefore regard a slaveholder as a good man. But if (as what sane man can doubt?) he may be a sincere Christian, to be in a state of mind which forbids our recognising him as such, is to be morally diseased or deranged. According to genuine High Church doctrine, every man baptized and in communion with "the church," is a Christian, and no man not in such communion can be a Christian, or go to heaven. But as it often happens that many in "the church" are openly wicked, and many out of it are eminently holy, the High Churchman, if sincere and consistent, must regard the former with complacent feelings of Christian brotherhood, and the latter, with aversion. It is, however, one of the most certain marks of a true Christian, to recognise and love the Christian character in others, and it is one of the

surest marks of an unrenewed heart, to feel aversion to those who are the true followers of Christ. The influence, therefore, of High Church principles on those who entertain them, must, from the nature of the case, be evil, and such all experience shows to be the fact. The fundamental principle of modern abolitionism must produce the same effect, on those who really embrace it. It must lead them to hate good men; it must cause them to shut their eyes to truth; to harden themselves against the plain manifestations of excellence. All this produces an unnatural conflict in their own minds. Their principle leads to the conclusion that the slaveholder is a "heinous criminal," they see however that he is sometimes a good man; they will not give up their principle nor the conclusion to which it leads, they are therefore forced to deny what they see to be true. This exasperates them and leads to the most unnatural exaggeration of what they call the crime of slaveholding, in order to satisfy their conscience, and justify them to themselves in their hatred and denunciation of good men. This sometimes goes so far as to produce complete moral derangement, when malice assumes in the view of the moral maniac, the appearance and character of benevolence, and cursing and bitterness sound in his ears like the accents of love. Our country has furnished more than one example of this kind, and the perverting influence of the fundamental error of the party is as manifest as day in the moral state of the great body of those in whom it exists as a practical principle.

It is no doubt true that no man's character is formed by one opinion; and therefore there are many who belong to the general class of abolitionists, who are in spirit and conduct, exemplary men. This, however, is no disproof of the evil tendency of the distinguishing principle of the party. In many minds it exists as little more than a speculation; in others its influence is counteracted by natural disposition, by the power of other and right opinions, and by the grace of God. But in itself, and as far as it is allowed to operate, it is evident that a principle which makes the man who entertains it, regard and denounce good men, who really love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, as heinous criminals, unfit for Christian communion, must pervert the heart, and, where it has its full effect, destroy all semblance of religion. It is not invidious, nor otherwise improper, to appeal to the spirit and conduct of a party in illustration of the tendency of their distinctive doctrine, and while we admit, as above stated, that there are many good men among the abolitionists, we regard it as a notorious fact, that the spirit of the party, as a party, is an evil spirit; a spirit of railing, of bitterness, of exaggeration; a spirit which leads to the perversion of facts, and to assertions which often shock the common sense and moral feelings of the community. What but a spirit which blinds the mind, and perverts the heart, could lead, for example, to the assertion that in our country a minister, without injury to his character, could tie up his slave on Sabbath morning, and

having inflicted a cruel punishment, leave him suspended, go to church, preach the gospel, and administer the Lord's Supper, and then return to inflict additional stripes on the lacerated back of his wretched victim. To assert that a clergyman may be a hypocrite, or a forger, or a murderer, or a monster of cruelty, would not shock the common sense of men, for such things have been and may well be again; but to assert as characterizing the Christian people in our southern states, that a minister may without injury to his standing among them be guilty of atrocious cruelty, is a flagrant falsehood, which none but a fanatic could utter, and none but fanatics believe. And fanaticism, be it remembered, is only one form of the malignant passions. Speaking then in general terms, the spirit of the party, as manifested in their publications, is fierce, bitter and abusive,\* as might be expected from the nature of their fundamental principle. Contrast with this for a moment the case of the early Christians. They were obliged to separate from the community in which they lived, to form a party by themselves, to denounce idolatry as a great sin, and idolaters as unfit for Christian Communion. But as their distinctive doctrines were true, the moral influence of those doctrines upon themselves was good; it did not render them as a class fierce, bitter and abusive; they were mild, kind, and conciliatory. The same thing may be said of the modern Christian missionaries in every part of the world and of every denomination. Though surrounded by the abominations of heathenism, and in continued conflict with error, they are not exasperated men, dealing in denunciations and abuse. The reason why their minds are composed, and in the exercise of benevolent affections, is that truth, and not error, is the principle which controls them. They are not called upon to do violence to their own moral judgments; they are not forced to treat the good as though they were wicked; and to justify themselves by saying that in despite of all appearances to the contrary, the men and things which they denounce, must be evil. If then it is true, that the spirit of the abolitionists, as a party, and speaking in the general, is an evil spirit, it is a decisive proof that their distinctive doctrine as a party is a false doctrine. For we are commanded to judge of things by their fruits.

Another collateral proof of the fallacy of their peculiar views, is that they have failed to command the assent of the great body of the intelligent and pious men of the country. Every great moral truth has a self-evidencing light. To the ignorant or depraved it may sometimes be difficult to communicate such

\* This is substantially admitted even by Dr. Channing, who is claimed as the great ornament of their party. "The abolitionists have done wrong, I believe: nor is their wrong to be winked at, because done fanatically, or with good intentions; for how much mischief may be wrought with good designs! They have fallen into the common error of enthusiasts [fanatics?], that of exaggerating their object, of feeling as if no evil existed but that which they opposed, and as if no guilt could be compared with that of countenancing and upholding it. The tone of their newspapers, as far as I have seen them, has often been fierce, bitter and abusive."—*Slavery*. By William E. Channing, p. 183.

truths; that is, to make them distinct objects in their apprehension. But when understood or perceived they are of necessity perceived to be true. And the object of discussion on such doctrines, is not to prove them, but to state them; to present them as they are before the moral judgment of the mind; for the only way in which we can know a thing to be right or wrong is by seeing it to be the one or the other. No man was ever led to the perception of the moral evil of a thing, by arguing from its effects. He may see that a thing, indifferent in itself, is wrong under circumstances which make it productive of evil; and he may have his impression of the degree in which a thing is morally wrong, greatly influenced by observing its effects; but all things right or wrong in themselves are immediately perceived in their true character by every human mind, as soon as they are fairly presented to it, or clearly apprehended. It is indeed admitted that the moral judgment of men is often influenced by their interests, or by their previous moral condition. These causes operate, however, by either diverting the attention from the true object, so that it is not in fact properly perceived; or by affecting favourably or otherwise the sensibility of the soul, and thus modifying the moral emotions by whose light and under whose guidance the judgment of the mind is formed. The question whether heretics should be put to death, if it could be presented clearly to dispassionate men, could receive but one answer. The reason why some affirm and others deny the propriety of such executions, is, that entirely different questions are really before their minds. To a Protestant the question is, whether a man in the exercise of a discretion for which he is responsible to God alone, can justly be punished for the wrong exercise of that discretion, by those who have neither the competency nor right to sit in judgment on the case. That question every human being must answer in the negative. But to a genuine Romanist, the question is, whether a man who is guilty of an atrocious crime should be punished at the discretion of those who are infallible in judgment on such matters, and who have full authority to carry their judgment into effect. This again is a question which every man must answer in the affirmative. The fact, therefore, that men make different answers to questions involving grave points in morals, is no disproof of the self-evidencing light of moral truth; and of the legitimate authority with which it commands assent when it is clearly presented to the mind. This being admitted, we say that the fact that the great mass of the intelligent and pious men of the country reject the doctrine that "slaveholding is a heinous crime in the sight of God," is proof that it is false. For this fact cannot be accounted for by saying they do not understand the question; that the thing denied is not rightly conceived of, or is not clearly presented to their minds. Every man knows what slaveholding is; and men know what they mean when they deny that it is in its very nature criminal. Nor can it be said, that this judgment arises from want of

attention to the subject. There are many things to which even good men give an indolent assent as right, which, when they come to consider, they see to be wrong. This was the case with the slave-trade, and many other instances of a similar nature might be adduced. There are also many things which are long regarded as right, because they really are right upon the assumption of the correctness of the principles adopted by those who pronounce the judgment. Thus putting heretics to death is right, on the assumption of the infallibility of the church, and of its right to enforce its judgments by civil penalties. In the present case the judgment of the conscience of the country on the subject of slaveholding, cannot be set aside on the ground of want of consideration. The matter has been discussed in every way for a series of years, and that judgment is becoming the more fixed, the more it is enlightened.

Nor can this judgment be invalidated by attributing it to self-interest. We readily admit that if a man is personally interested in the decision of a question, he is not a fair judge in the matter. The landholders in England sincerely believe the corn laws to be beneficial; the manufacturers as sincerely believe the reverse. Among ourselves, the growers of cotton honestly hold one system of political economy, and the growers of hemp another. It is hardly possible for a man, whose interests are deeply involved in any question, to avoid allowing his mind to dwell unduly upon those considerations which favour the decision which he desires, nor is he qualified to give the opposite considerations their proper weight. But we deny that the great body of intelligent and good men in this country are under the bias of interest, in the judgment which they give concerning slavery. They have no selfish interest in the matter. Those dwelling in non-slaveholding States might arrive at the conclusion that slaveholding is a sin, without endangering any of their personal interests; or disquieting their conscience in the least. They are just as free from selfish bias in the case as though sitting in judgment on the despotism of Russia. The unbiased judgment, therefore, of the great mass of intelligent and pious men in this country that slaveholding is not a crime, given after due consideration, is itself an argument not to be gainsaid, against the primary principle of the abolitionists.

It may be asked how we know that such is the judgment of the intelligent and good men of the country? The answer is, that is a conceded point. What is more common here or abroad than the assertion that the church and the clergy in this country, are the great enemies of abolition? What topic of denunciation is more frequent in all the publications of the party than the corruption of the church on this subject, and how loud the complaints that no church has yet been brought up to take ground with the abolitionists? Now we suppose no one, not even an abolitionist, will deny that the church, meaning thereby all in this great country who profess to be the followers of Christ, comprises a large portion of the intelligence and piety of the country; and as

to the educated men not included among the members of the church, it is plain that a still smaller portion belong to the ranks of abolitionism. No church (i. e., denomination of Christians) of any consideration for numbers, has adopted the principle that slaveholders as such should be excluded from Christian communion. The Congregationalists of New England, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Methodists, have one and all refused to sanction the unscriptural doctrine on which the whole structure of moral abolitionism rests. Now we consider it little less than preposterous to assume that a mere fraction of the great family of Christians should, on a simple question of morals, be in the right, and the great mass of their brethren, with the same advantages for forming a correct judgment, in the wrong.

But have not the abolitionists the voice of the church in Great Britain in their favour? Far from it. There is indeed a great deal of loose declamation, and no little fanatical zeal on this subject prevailing in that country. But when did any denomination of Christians in Great Britain assume the ground that slaveholders should be excluded from the church? We are not aware that the missionaries of the Church of England, or of the Church of Scotland, or of the Independents, or of the Methodists, or of the Baptists, or of the Moravians, operating in countries where slavery existed, were ever directed or authorized to act upon the principle of debarring all slaveholders from the table of the Lord. That is a step towards the subversion of the scriptures as a rule of faith and practice, yet to be taken. And the day we trust is far distant when this form of benevolent infidelity shall receive the sanction of any of the great bodies into which the church is now divided.

Strong as these arguments against the doctrine of the abolitionists, derived from its necessary and actual effects, and from the judgment of the great mass of competent judges, are, we admit they would be driven to the wind by one clear declaration of scripture in its favour. Let God be true, but every man a liar. Into this scriptural argument, however, we cannot persuade ourselves to enter at any length, because the matter does not admit of argument. It is as plain as it can be made. A few years ago, when a spirit of fanaticism seized the friends of temperance, much learning was expended in the attempt to prove that the Bible condemned as sinful even the moderate use of intoxicating liquor. Now what has become of that doctrine? The plain sense of the scripture, like a mighty stream, has borne away all the learned rubbish so laboriously raked together, and would have done so had no attempt been made, able and conclusive as those attempts were, to remove that rubbish by other means. In like manner the scriptures do so plainly teach that slaveholding is not in itself a crime, that it is a mere waste of time to attempt to prove it; and a great deal worse than a waste of time to attempt to make them teach the contrary.

It will of course be admitted that what God has at any time sanctioned cannot be evil in its own nature. If, therefore, it can

be shown that God did permit his people under the old dispensation to be slaveholders, slaveholding in itself cannot be a heinous crime. It will further be admitted that anything permitted under the old economy, and which the apostles continued to permit to those whom they received into the church, cannot be a crime justifying exclusion from Christian communion.

That God did under the old dispensation permit his people to hold slaves is proved not only by the fact that Abraham was, with the implied permission of God, a slaveholder, but especially by the fact that through Moses that permission was expressly granted, the class of persons who might be held in slavery designated, the different ways in which they might be reduced to a state of bondage pointed out, and laws enacted as to the manner in which they were to be treated. All these are plain matters of fact, admitted, as far as we know, by every man, woman and child, who ever read the Bible, until the lurid day of modern illumination. These facts are abundantly proved by Dr. Junkin and Mr. Graham in the pamphlets which stand in the margin of this article, and to which we refer any of our readers who have any doubt on the subject. We shall content ourselves with merely citing a few passages from the laws of Moses, allowing them to speak for themselves.

What however is a slave? Before determining whether slavery is recognised in the Bible, we must know what slavery is. "A slave," says the reviewer of Dr. Junkin's pamphlet, "is a human being who is made an article of property." And this is the definition usually given by abolitionists. The gravamen of the charge against slavery is, that it makes a man a thing in distinction from a person. This charge is an absurdity in the very terms of it; and yet we doubt not that it is some obscure feeling of the outrage to human nature involved in making "a man a thing," that is the source of much of the horror commonly expressed on this subject; and the reason of the ready credence often given to the doctrine that "slaveholding is a heinous crime." It would indeed be a great crime, and moreover a great miracle, if it involved making things of human beings. Under no system of slave-laws that ever existed is a slave regarded otherwise than as a person, that is, an intelligent moral agent. Those very laws, atrocious as they often are, by holding the slave responsible for his acts, suppose him to be a human being. The abolitionists impose upon themselves and others by not defining what they mean by property, and by not determining the sense in which one man can be said to be the property of another man. Property is simply the right of possession and use; the right of having and using. From the necessity of the case, as well as from the laws of God, this right must vary according to the nature of its object. If a man has property in land, he must use it as land, and he cannot use it as anything else. If he has property in an animal he can use it only as an animal; and if he has property in a man, he can use him only as a man. And as the use he may make of an animal is regulated by its

nature and by the laws of God ; so his property in a man gives him no right to treat him contrary to his nature, or to act towards him with injustice. If one man has property in another he must still treat him as a human being ; if he kills him he is guilty of murder ; if he insults or wounds him he is guilty of cruelty ; if he shuts him out from the gospel, he will find the blood of a soul upon his hands ; if he keep him in ignorance, he is guilty of gross injustice. The right of property, even if admitted, gives no right to do any of the things just mentioned. It gives in some cases the power to do them, just as the right of a parent to the control of his children gives him the power of rendering them miserable, of depriving them of the gospel, and of bringing them up in ignorance. But it confers no right to do these things. It is the confused notion which they entertain of the right of property which leads the writers on this subject into most of their false reasoning. "If," says the Reviewer before quoted, "A may justly hold B as property, as he holds his land, cattle, &c. ; it necessarily follows that A may justly sell B to be separated from his wife, and B's children to be separated from their parents." P. 59. He might as well say, that because a man may justly hold cattle as property, as he holds his lands or trees, therefore he may justly treat his cattle as if they were made of wood. His property in cattle gives him no right to use them in any way in which sentient creatures ought not to be used ; and his property in a man gives him no right to use *him*, in any way in which a rational, immortal being, his equal in the sight of God, may not properly be used. The right of property is merely the right to have and to use a thing according to its nature ; and as a man has a rational, moral, and social nature, it is no more an incident of the right of property in him, that these attributes may be disregarded, than it is an incident of the right of property in an ox or horse that their nature as sentient creatures may be disregarded. What men have the power to do, in virtue of the relation in which they stand to others, and what they have a right to do in virtue of that relation, are two very different things, which abolitionists constantly confound. As already remarked, the parental relation gives a man the power to do a thousand things he has no right to do ; so the relation between master and slave, assuming it to be a perfectly righteous one, gives the former the power to do many things which that relation cannot justify. The only right of property which one man has or can have in another, is a right to his services ; just as his right of property in a horse is a right to have and use him as a horse. And as the obligation arises out of ownership in the latter case, to provide for the wants of the horse, as a sentient creature, so the obligation arises out of the ownership in the former case, to provide for the wants of the man, not only as a sentient, but as a rational, moral, social and immortal being. And as the man who, on the plea of ownership, should neglect the wants of his horse, would be self condemned ; so the man who,

on a similar plea, neglects the infinitely more pressing wants of his slave, as a rational creature, will be condemned by the united judgment of God and man. If abolitionists could disabuse their minds of their crude ideas on the subject of property, though they might find they had lost almost all their stock in trade, they would at least have the satisfaction of understanding what they are writing about, and might be induced to adopt wiser measures for accomplishing their object.

It follows from what has been said of the right of property, as consisting in the right of having and using, that it may be transferable. It is not necessarily so, as a man may have a full right to have and use a thing, when he cannot transfer that right to another. This is often the case when a certain property is attached to an office or a title. In other cases the right of transfer may be restricted by certain conditions ; as when slaves are bound to the soil. Their owner can sell them only on condition of selling the land on which they live. The price he receives is not the mere value of the land, but the value of the land together with the value of his right to the service of those living upon it. In ordinary cases, however, the right of property is transferable. If I have a right to the possession or use of anything, I may give, or sell, or bequeath that right to another. Of course, however, I can give only what I possess ; and as my right of property in a man is and can be nothing more than the right to his services, that is all I can transfer to another ; and this right must go with all the responsibilities which of necessity attach to it ; the responsibility of providing for his wants as a man, who has a soul as well as a body. When, therefore, we speak of buying and selling men, all that is or can be meant is the transfer of this right of service ; a right of necessity limited and defined by the nature of the being whose services are to be rendered. A man's right to the services of another may be unconditional, so that he may transfer it at any time or to any person ; or it may be so limited that he can transfer it only when he transfers the land on which the man lives ; or his right may extend to only a part of his time, as in the case of the old feudal tenures ; or to a particular kind of service only, such as that due from a feudal proprietor to his lord, or from a subject to his sovereign. But whatever the right is, it is generally transferable, and therefore we find subjects passing from one sovereign to another, serfs from one landlord to another, and slaves from one master to another ; and in all these cases, which in principle are the same, there is nothing more than the transfer of the right of service.

Another obvious remark which flows from what has been said is, that the nature of the relation between a master and his slaves does not depend upon the mode in which that relation is constituted, or upon the time it is to continue. Any man who is the property of another man, is, by the admitted definition of the term, a slave. It matters not, as far as the nature of the relation is concerned,

whether that right of property was acquired by gift, inheritance or purchase; and if by purchase, it matters not whether the man was sold by himself, or his parents, or by a former owner, or by the state in punishment of some crime. The validity and justice of a man's title to any property, do indeed depend upon the immediately prior title whence it is derived. And if the proposition of the abolitionists was that the right of property in man, unless acquired in a proper way, cannot be justly claimed or exercised, it would be perfectly harmless. It would be analogous to a declaration that landholding under a fraudulent title is unjust. But would it hence follow that landholding is a heinous crime? Their proposition is that slaveholding is a crime; and their argument is that one man cannot rightfully own another man; that from his nature man cannot be an article of property; and they attempt to sustain this argument from scripture by trying to show that the Bible, so far from authorizing one man's owning another, expressly forbids it. Having shown that ownership in man includes and can include nothing more than a right to his services, our object in this paragraph is to prove the fallacy of the above argument, by showing first that it is so broad as to include all modes of acquiring this right of property, since it condemns the thing itself; and secondly, that when they come to the scriptures, they attempt to evade their authority by resting their condemnation not on the thing itself, not on the mere fact of one man's owning another, but on the particular mode in which he acquires his right as owner, and on the length of time he exercises it. But if the fundamental principle of the abolitionists is correct, it obviously makes no difference how the relation of master and slave is constituted. However ownership in man is acquired, it must, according to their doctrine, be unjust and offensive to God. If a man reduced to poverty, not knowing how to obtain a support, comes to another and offers to serve him all his life, if the law of the land recognises such a contract, he becomes a slave; he belongs to his master in the fullest sense in which one man can belong to another. This is what the Egyptians did, when under the pressure of famine, having sold everything they had, they came to Joseph and said: Buy us and our land for bread; and Joseph gave them bread and said, Behold I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is an instance of the relation of master and slave constituted by voluntary contract. And there are numerous cases of a like kind recorded in scripture on a less extensive scale. Now suppose that a man who had in this way acquired the right of property to a number of men, should, as a gift or for money, transfer that right to another, would its nature be altered by the transfer? Would the men be more slaves in the second case than in the former? Would the first master be entitled to lift clean hands to God, and the second be a man-stealer, and everything else that abolitionists call slaveholders? It is perfectly obvious that the nature of the relation of their principle, does not depend on the mode in which it is con-

stituted. If a man sells himself he is as much a slave as if sold by another man, and consequently the abolitionists cannot evade the authority of the sacred scriptures, by saying (though without evidence) that the slaves the Israelites were permitted to hold, sold themselves. Suppose they did, their masters were still slaveholders, and therefore, according to their doctrine, guilty of a heinous crime against God.

Nor does the nature of the relation between master and slave depend on the length of time for which it is to continue. A man sold for a term of years is as much a slave as a man sold for life. This is evident from the definition of the word slave, as one who belongs to another; from the usage of scripture and of human laws on the subject. In most of the states in which slavery has been abolished, it was enacted that slaves born after a certain year should be free at the age of twenty-one or twenty-five years. Until that age they were slaves; subject to all the laws relating to that class of persons. It hence follows, that if the Bible sanctioned slaveholding for a term of years, it sanctioned what abolitionists condemn as a heinous crime. The validity of the argument therefore against the abolitionists, drawn from the laws of Moses, does not depend on the question whether the slaves there spoken of sold themselves, or whether their bondage was perpetual or ceased at the year of Jubilee. If they were sold so as to belong to another man for life or for a term of years, they were for the time being slaves.

If the abolitionists turn round and say their arguments are directed against involuntary and perpetual bondage, we answer, 1. That such is not the fact. Their denunciations are directed against slaveholding, against making men property, an article of traffic to be bought and sold. But a slave who sold himself, as the Egyptians did, may be sold by his master for life or a term of years, as well as a man who was born a slave. And, therefore, their arguments are not in point of fact confined to slavery which is involuntary and perpetual. 2. In a multitude of cases in our own country and elsewhere, slaves prefer to remain the property of their masters, secure of an abundant support, when in health, and of a comfortable maintenance in sickness and old age. In all such cases, slaveholding is not a heinous crime, if involuntary bondage alone is slavery. Yet it is notorious that the class of slaveholders whose slaves prefer to remain such, are not exempted from the denunciations of the abolitionists. They are considered as holding an unlawful relation to their fellow men, as much as though they were living in adultery or in any other acknowledged crime. The very question as stated by the abolitionists is, whether those professing Christians who hold slaves are guilty of a sin which calls for the censure of the church? 3. This change of position is of course a concession that slaveholding is not in itself a sin. A man may be an article of property, he may be bought and sold, he may be a slave, provided he only consents to be so. Slaveholding, then, is like landholding, right or wrong,

according to circumstances. The propriety of both depends on the validity of the title. It is sinful for a man to keep possession of a piece of land, to which he has no other title than force or fraud; and it is sinful for one man to hold another as a slave unless he has a legitimate title to his services. The whole question now is, what is a legitimate title? Abolitionists are forced, inconsistently indeed, to admit that consent of parties confers a good title. But can such title be acquired in no other way? A full answer to that question would require a thorough examination of the origin of the right of property, and of the circumstances which rightfully give one man a claim, more or less extended, to the services of another. Such an examination, however, the present occasion forbids, and our object does not demand it. It is enough to remark, 1. That the validity of the present title of a man to his property does not depend on the validity of the title of the original possessor from whom the right is derived. That is to say, the title which the people of this country have to their farms, does not depend upon the question whether the Pope and the sovereigns of Europe had a right to take this country from the Indians, and give it to whom they pleased. Most landholders in New Jersey trace their titles to the gift by Charles II. to the Duke of York. If it be admitted that Charles had no valid right to the soil, and therefore could convey none to his brother, nor his brother to the original proprietors who purchased from him, it will not follow that the title of the present holders of the soil is invalid or unrighteous. Neither does it follow from the simple fact that the ancestors of the slaves now in this country were most unrighteously obtained, that the title of the owners of the present generation is necessarily invalid. 2. It may be remarked that the right of ownership of one man in another, that is, a right to his services, may arise from dependence. If that dependence is absolute and perpetual, so will the right of property be. If it is only partial and temporary, the right arising from it will in like manner be partial and temporary. Dependence is one of the sources at least of the obligation of children to render service to their parents; and the assumption of such dependence of feudal serfs on their lords, and of subjects on their sovereigns, is made one great ground of the claim of the latter to the services of the former. If, therefore, one man was absolutely dependent on another for support and protection, he would be his slave, that is, he would be righteously bound to render him service. This remark is made simply as indicating one of the ways in which the relation between master and slave might originate without injustice. 3. But as all slaves in this country were born such, the only practically important question is, whether a constitution of society in which one man is by birth placed in such a relation to another man as to be bound to labour for him, upon condition of having all his wants as a human being adequately supplied, is necessarily sinful? That question cannot be answered in the affirmative, without asserting that it is sinful to have the relative

position of men in society determined by the accident of birth. And this latter position cannot be maintained, without contradicting the Bible and the common judgment of mankind. By divine appointment, under the old dispensation, one man was born High Priest, the most important position in the community, another an ordinary priest, another a simple Levite, another a layman, who could never attain to the privileges of the other classes, and another a hewer of wood and drawer of water. Such an arrangement cannot in itself be sinful, because God ordained it; nor does the light of nature contradict this decision of the word of God. In some states of society this might be the best method of distributing the various classes of the community, in others it might be highly injurious. It is therefore neither forbidden nor commanded. Men are left at liberty to determine the mode in which society shall be constituted, guided by the peculiar circumstances of the community, and the immutable obligation to adopt that method which is for the general good. Moreover, neither the church nor world has ever maintained that hereditary monarchy and hereditary nobility were in their own nature sinful, so that no man can be a monarch or a noble without committing heinous crime in the sight of God. And even if the monarch were possessed of irresponsible power over the property and lives of his subjects, undesirable and impossible as such a form of government would be, in an advanced state of society, it would not in its nature be sinful. Even Mr. Birney, the abolition candidate for the Presidency, has admitted that his conscience would allow him to possess the unlimited power of a Roman Emperor, though it would direct him to use that power for the benefit of his subjects. But if the word of God does not condemn as sinful either the possession of unlimited power, or the designation by the accident of birth of the person who is to hold it; then it is admitted that it is not necessarily sinful that one man should by birth be assigned to the rank of king, noble, or master, and another to that of subject, commoner, or slave. As this diversity of condition among men has always existed, as there have always been masters and servants, if there is nothing sinful in the nature of the relation, neither is there in its being determined by birth.

Does then the word of God sanction this relation? Did it permit the Israelites to own men, to buy and sell them? If so, then no man who can bow his heart and conscience to the authority of God, can pronounce slaveholding to be a heinous crime. It is conceded, that the heathen by whom these patriarchs and their descendants were surrounded, were slaveholders in the strictest sense of the term. This was the case with the Egyptians, the Midianites, and the inhabitants of Canaan. The Reviewer of Dr. Junkin allows that Joseph in the house of Potiphar was properly called a Hebrew slave, and that the servants given by Abimelech to Abraham were slaves, since Abimelech was a heathen. But on what evidence does this conviction rest that the heathen of that age were slaveholders? It rests on the fact that the Scrip-

tures speak of their having, buying, selling, and giving away men as servants. This is regarded as sufficient. But all this is recorded of the Patriarchs and of the Hebrews under Moses. Abraham is spoken of as having men servants and maid servants, they are enumerated as a part of his possessions; he is said to have received slaves as a present: Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men servants and maid servants, and gave them unto Abraham. Gen. xx., 14. Pharaoh had before made him a similar gift, for it is said, he entreated Abram well for Sarah's sake, and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and men servants, and maid servants. He circumcised "all that were bought with his money." Hagar was his bond-woman, and as such is contrasted with Sarah who was a free woman. All that the apostle says of this case in Gal. iv., 21-31, depends for its significancy on the fact that Hagar was a slave, to whom could be applied the phrase *eis δουλείαν γεννώσα*, "gendering to bondage." How could it be said, "She is in bondage with her children," but on the assumption that she was a slave, and that the children of a slave mother were born in bondage? This is the very point of the apostle's illustration. So in later times we hear of the Hebrews having, buying, and selling slaves, for a slave is a man who may be bought and sold. In Numbers xxxi., 26 et seqq., we have an account of the distribution of the spoil taken from the Midianites, among which women and children are enumerated, and which were given in certain proportions to the conquerors. This is a narrative, which if found in any other book, would be universally understood as teaching that these captives were slaves. And there is no reason why it should not be so understood here. As we have in this case one of the ways in which the Hebrews were allowed by God to acquire slaves, so we hear of their possessing them, and buying and selling them. In Lev. xxii. 10, 11, it is said, "A sojourner of a priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. But if the priest buy any soul with his money he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house, they shall eat of it." The precision of modern language could not distinguish more accurately between a free servant and a slave, than is done in this passage. The law respecting the Passover was of the same kind. "There shall no stranger eat thereof; but every man's servant that is bought with money, when thou hast circumcised him, then he shall eat thereof," Ex. xii., 43, 44. Being thus bought, these slaves were by the law of Moses regarded as the property of their masters. They are called money possession. If a man smote his servant, if he died under his hand, the master was to be punished; if he continued a day or two the owner was not punished, for the servant was his money, Ex. xxi., 21. The right of masters to sell their slaves is constantly assumed. It is implied in the right to buy, which supposes a sale. It is implied in the very nature of the relation as the slave was the money, the possession, the inheritance of the master. It is implied in the restrictions which are imposed upon the right, a

man could not sell a female slave whom he had humbled; "thou shalt not make merchandise of her because thou hast humbled her," Deut. xxi., 14. Nor could he sell her to a foreign nation, Ex. xxi., 9. If a master wounded a slave he could not sell him, he must let him go free without money, Ex. xxi.

The clearest and most explicit enactments on this whole subject are found in Lev. xxv., 39-46. "If thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond servant; but as an hired servant, and as a sojourner shall he be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee; then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his father shall he return. For they are my servants which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God. Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, *shall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them* for a possession. They shall be your bondmen for ever; but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule over one another with rigour."

We do not know how this passage can be rendered plainer than it is, nor can we hope that any man, who is in such a state of mind as to prevent his seeing and admitting that it authorized the Hebrews to hold slaves, could be convinced even if one rose from the dead. It is here taught, 1. That if a Hebrew through poverty sold himself, he should not be reduced to the abject state of a slave. 2. That he should be treated as a hired servant. 3. And be allowed to go free at the year of Jubilee. This is the precise condition which abolitionists assign to the heathen servants among the Hebrews, whereas it is here declared to be peculiar to servants who were children of Israel; who could not be sold as bondmen, *venditione mancipii*, as the elder Michaelis translates it. Of the other class it is taught, 1. That they might be bought for bondmen. 2. That they might be held as a possession or property. 3. They might be bequeathed by their masters to the children as a possession; *hereditario jure possidebitis*, as Michaelis renders the phrase; or as De Wette translates it to the letter: *Ihr möget sie vererben auf eure Söhne nach euch als Eigenthum.* You may bequeath them to your children after you for a possession. 4. This bondage was perpetual. They shall be your bondmen for ever. One of the points of distinction between the two classes was, that the former could not be sold in perpetuity—the latter might. As the land of a Hebrew could not be alienated, so his person could not be reduced to perpetual bondage. At the year of jubilee he

was to go free, and his inheritance reverted to him. In contrast with this, Moses allows the heathen to be reduced to perpetual bondage. Hebrews shall not be sold with the sale of a slave, *venditione mancipii*, v. 42; the heathen may be thus sold, is the very point of contrast, v. 46. If the former passage forbade reducing Israelites to the condition of slaves, the latter allowed the heathen to be so reduced. Again, both the Hebrew words and the construction in v. 39, are the same as v. 46. An Israelite "thou shalt not compel to serve as a bond servant;" the heathen "shall be your bondmen." What is forbidden in the one case, was allowed in the other.\*

If then, men, who were the property, a possession of other men, who might be bought and sold; who could be given or bequeathed as a possession to the children of their masters, were slaves, then were the Hebrews allowed to hold slaves. The attempts made to evade this plain teaching of the scriptures are precisely similar to those which are made to prove that the Bible condemns as sinful all use of wine as a beverage, and that it pronounces even defensive war to be sinful. It is impossible to answer mere assertions. And the more extravagant the assertion, the more impossible the answer. How can a man be refuted who should say, as we know an ultra advocate of temperance did say, that the passage which speaks of John the Baptist coming neither eating nor drinking, means that he drank no water, but only milk; whereas Christ came drinking water; though he was called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. So when abolitionists say in reference to all the passages above referred to, that the bondmen of the Hebrews, even from among the heathen, were voluntary servants, who themselves received the purchase money paid for them, that they were in fact hired servants, receiving wages, hiring themselves for a term of years instead of for a single year, or for a day, or week, or month, who could neither be sold nor bequeathed; we know not how they are to be answered, any more than if they were to assert they were all ten feet high. Certain it is, the assertion is gratuitous. It is not only destitute of support, but contrary to the plain meaning of the words, and to the sense attributed to them in all ages. Moses found the institution of slavery existing at his day, and acted with regard to it as he did with regard to many other things; instead of prohibiting it, he made laws regulating the power of the master, and furthering the interests of the slave. He forbade any Hebrew being reduced to the state of

\* We copy part of the comment of Henry as given in the Comprehensive Commentary on vs. 44-46. "They might purchase bondmen of the heathen nations round about them, or of those strangers that sojourned among them (except of the seven nations to be destroyed), and might claim a dominion over them, and entail them on their families as an inheritance, for the year of Jubilee should give no discharge to them." This he says was designed to intimate "that none shall have the benefit of the gospel jubilee, but only Israelites indeed, and the children of Abraham by faith; as for those who continue heathenish, they continue bondmen." If Matthew Henry were living now and in this country, should we not see him threatened with deposition from the ministry for such sentiments?

perpetual bondage; he required that slaves of heathen origin should be set free whenever they were cruelly treated, and as a punishment for such cruelty, he required that the master should assume towards them the responsibilities of a parent, introduce them into the covenant of God as though they were his own children, grant them access to the means of religious instruction, by admitting them to the passover and other commemorative feasts, by which the knowledge of God's dealings with his people was principally preserved and propagated; and he enjoined that they should share in all the privileges of the Sabbath and sabbatical year. In this way, rather than by the immediate abolition or absolute prohibition of slavery, infinite wisdom saw fit, in that age and state of the world, to provide for the improvement and happiness of men. And by this means thousands from the surrounding nations were rescued from heathenism, introduced into the church of God and made a component part of his people.

We have thought it the less necessary to go into detail on the argument from the Old Testament, because we consider abolitionists as abandoning the whole ground, and conceding the whole question, when they come to the New Testament. How they can avoid feeling condemned out of their own lips, is more than we can understand. The admitted facts of the case are these, 1. That at the time of the introduction of Christianity, slavery in its worst form prevailed extensively over the world. The slaves are estimated as amounting to one-half or two-thirds of the population of the Roman Empire; and the severity with which they were treated was extreme. 2. That neither Christ nor his apostles ever denounced slaveholding as a crime. 3. That they never urged emancipation as an immediate duty. These are the facts: the inference is irresistible, slaveholding cannot be a crime. It is placed by the inspired writers upon the same ground with despotism. The possession of absolute sovereignty in the state, the exercise by one man of the supreme legislative, judicial and executive functions of government, is not in its own nature sinful. If such a sovereign is wise, just and benevolent, he may be a great benefactor, and secure the approbation of all good men. Accordingly, the apostles, though living under the reign of Nero, while they denounce all injustice and cruelty, whether in despot, master, or parent, never say a word about the sin of despotism. On the contrary, they enjoined the duty of submission to the exercise of that authority; teaching that human government, however constituted, was an ordinance of God; that the king, though such a king as Nero, was still the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath, responsible for the exercise of power, but not for the then possession of it. In like manner, though masters were invested with greater power over their slaves than any master now possesses, the apostles, instead of enjoining them to lay it aside, commanded them to exercise it properly, to be just and equal in all their dealings, remembering that they too had a master in heaven.

On the slaves they enjoined obedience, not only when the masters were good and gentle, but also when they were froward; holding up to them the example of the Redeemer himself, who patiently submitted to injury. They cautioned those who had believing masters, against despising them because they were brethren. The equality which existed between them and their masters, as brethren in Christ, was no reason why they should not render to them the honour and service due to them as their masters according to the flesh.

Such is the plain teaching of the New Testament on this subject, and it is absolutely irreconcilable with the assumption that the apostles regarded slaveholding as a heinous crime. It is here that the argument of the abolitionists breaks down entirely. We have often seen children building houses with cards; after laying a broad foundation and carrying up the structure with the greatest care and skill to the proposed height, in placing the last card in position, the whole collapses and lies in ruins at their feet. Thus these brethren begin with Abraham, and by dint of learning, ingenuity, and hard asserting, make out a tottering case; but when they come to the admission that Christ and his apostles, though living in the midst of slavery, never denounced slaveholding as a sin and never enjoined immediate emancipation as a duty, their whole laborious structure is prostrated in a moment. The concession of those facts is a concession that they differ from their Master and his inspired apostles.

The solution which they give of the facts referred to is altogether unsatisfactory. They say in substance, that the apostles concealed the truth, that they were afraid of consequences, that they acted from policy or motives of expediency.\* Our answer to this is: 1. That such conduct would be immoral. For men professing to be inspired teachers of truth and duty, to appear among men living in the daily commission of "a heinous crime in the sight of God," and never once tell them it was a crime; to allow them to go on in this course of iniquity to the ruin of their souls, is a supposition which shocks the moral sense. Nothing but the explicit declaration that slaveholding was a crime, and immediate emancipation a duty, could satisfy the demands of conscience in such a case. Men were constantly coming to the apostles to ask what they must do to be saved, what God would have them to do, and if they did not answer those questions openly and honestly, according to their real convictions, they were bad men. Such conduct in any other case would by all men be pronounced immo-

\* This is the ground they are forced to take. The Reviewer of Dr. Junkin's pamphlet says: "To have waged a public war against slavery, to have taken the stand and employed the active efforts now adopted by abolitionists, would have been, humanly speaking, to have drawn upon their heads immediate and utter destruction, and that without even the remotest prospect of benefiting the poor slaves."—P. 109. "We need not expect, therefore, in the New Testament, a direct declaration of the fact that man cannot hold property in man; nor that immediate emancipation is a Christian duty."—P. 110.

ral. Suppose our missionaries among the heathen, in teaching the gospel, should, from motives of policy, abstain from telling them the truth, should fail intentionally to inform them that idolatry, adultery, child-murder, or any like crime, was a grievous sin in the sight of God, would not all the world pronounce them unfaithful? Do not abolitionists condemn southern ministers for not explicitly stating that slaveholding is a crime, and immediate emancipation a duty? Would they not view with abhorrence the minister who really coincided with them in his views, and yet, through fear of the consequences, held his peace, and allowed his hearers to sin on in security? Would not, on the contrary, the world ring with their shouts in praise of the man who in fidelity to God, and in love to man, should openly preach the truth on these points to a congregation of slaveholders, even though it brought sudden destruction on his own head? We fear, however, we are only obscuring the clearness of a self-evident truth by multiplying illustrations. The conduct of the apostles is absolutely irreconcilable with moral honesty, if they believed slaveholding to be a heinous crime in the sight of God. They were either bad men, or they were not abolitionists, in the American sense of that word.

2. But again, the course ascribed to the apostles, in reference to slavery, is not only base in itself, but it is contrary to their conduct in all analogous cases. Slaveholding is the only sin familiar to those to whom they preached, and about which they wrote, that they failed to denounce. Idolatry was a crime which was more prevalent than slaveholding; more implicated in all the institutions of life, in support of which stronger passions were engaged, and in attacking which they could not look for the support of one-half or two-thirds of the community. Yet idolatry they everywhere proclaimed to be a crime inconsistent with Christianity, and a bar to salvation. The consequence was the apostles were persecuted even to death. It is not true that they kept back the truth for fear of suffering. They called God to witness that they declared the whole counsel of God, and were clear of every man's blood. It is said that the cases of idolatry and slavery are not parallel, because it was more dangerous to denounce the latter than the former. Admitting the fact, is the degree of danger attending the discharge of a duty the measure of its obligation? Must a religious teacher, in explaining the way of salvation, keep back the truth—one of the most effectual methods of teaching falsehood—because he may incur danger by inculcating it? We do not, however, believe the allegation. We believe that the apostles might have taught that slaveholding is a sin, with far less danger than that which they incurred by teaching that what the heathen sacrificed they sacrificed to devils. We need not conceive of their adopting the system of agitation, and the whole "moral machinery" of modern times. They adopted no such course with regard to idolatry. But they might doubtless with comparative safety have told slaveholders that it was their duty to emancipate their slaves.

They could as well have enjoined them to set their servants free, as to command them to render to them what is just and equal. Many men, without any great exhibition of courage, have taught and do still teach the moral evil of slaveholding in the midst of slaveholders. And even now, any man who, in a meek, sincere, and benevolent spirit, should say to southern planters that the relation they sustain to their slaves is contrary to the will of God, and incompatible with their own salvation, would meet with no greater disturbance than the Quakers have experienced in making their annual testimony against slavery.

The course ascribed to the apostles is not only inconsistent with fidelity and contrary to their uniform practice, but it is moreover opposed to the conduct of the messengers of God in all ages. The ancient prophets never failed to reprove the people for their sins, and to exhort them to repentance, no matter how strong the attachment of their hearers to their iniquity, or how powerful the interests leagued in its support. Elijah did not fail to denounce the worship of Baal, though Ahab and Jezebel were determined to kill the prophets of God; nor did John the Baptist fail to tell Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife.

This is one of the most serious aspects of this whole discussion. The testimony of scripture is so clearly against the fundamental principle of modern abolitionism, that the most violent processes of interpretation must be resorted to, to get rid of its authority; and the example of the apostles is so opposed to the doctrine of the party, that to evade its force they are constrained to ascribe to the messengers of Christ principles of conduct which the moral sense instinctively condemns. This course cannot be pursued without weakening the authority of the word of God. When any set of men assume that a doctrine, whether it be the Trinity, personal election, or future punishment, cannot be true, and go to the scriptures with the determination to silence their testimony, or to make them speak in accordance with their preconceived opinions, they wrong their own souls, and put themselves above the word of God. Or if they assume on general grounds that the use of wine, defensive war, the holding of slaves, is in itself a sin, and place the scriptures on the rack of criticism, to make them teach the same doctrine, it is bad for them, bad for the church, and bad for the country. It of course makes a great difference whether this conflict with the Bible is associated with the benevolent or with the malignant feelings of our nature; but it is well for us to remember that we cannot be more benevolent than God, and that it is vain for us to condemn what his word allows. And if we at any time feel that the scriptures trouble us; if we wish they did not say exactly what they do say, if we should be glad to alter them to bring them nearer to our mind, we may be certain that the fault is in ourselves. The more perfectly we can sympathize with the word as it is; the more entirely our understanding,

heart, and conscience, accord with its statements, the more healthful is the state of our minds. And on the contrary, the more we rise in conflict with its obvious import, the more we feel constrained to resort to evasions and unnatural interpretations to escape from its authority, the more certainly are we in the wrong. And when the pride of our nature rises so high as to lead us to declare that if the Bible really teaches this or that, which to all appearance it does teach, we renounce it, then we become judges and not doers of the law.

We have repeatedly admitted, though we believe the fundamental principles of abolitionism to be false and its spirit fanatical, leading to a censoriousness, and evil speaking of Christian brethren, exceedingly offensive to God, yet that many good men are to be found in their ranks. It may therefore be proper to ask, How it is that on a question of morals, good men should be so divided in their judgments, one affirming, another denying that slaveholding is a crime? We think we have already intimated the true solution of this question. They have in a great measure different objects before their minds. What the abolitionists, for the most part, really condemn, the true objects of their moral disapprobation, is not slaveholding, but the slave-laws; and what the other party vindicate as not necessarily inconsistent with the will of God, is slaveholding, and not the slave-laws of this or any other country. It is the want of discrimination between these entirely distinct things, **SLAVEHOLDING AND THE SLAVE-LAWS**, we firmly believe is the cause of a great part of the difference of sentiment which exists on this subject. We have already adverted to one source of this confusion when speaking of the nature of property. The abolitionists constantly assume that the incidents of the right of property are the same whatever may be the nature of its object. Hence they infer that if one man may justly hold another man as property, he may justly treat him as he may treat any other article of property; if the validity of the title be acknowledged, it follows that the owner may disregard the nature of his slave, treat him as if he were not a husband, or not a parent; as though he had no social affections; or was not a rational being, and had no soul to be saved or lost. This is what they mean to condemn, and this every good man in the world would condemn; and if this was a correct view of what is meant by the right of property in man, there could be no diversity of opinion as to whether slaveholding were a heinous crime. Again, they constantly confound what a man has a right to do in virtue of his relation of master, with what the laws of the land give him the liberty to do, or even enjoin upon him. Thus the Reviewer above quoted, argues that if the apostles recognised slaveholding under the Roman laws as consistent with a Christian character, they must have recognised as consistent with that character, all the oppressions, cruelty, and even murder, which those laws sanctioned or permitted. "The Roman law," he says, "allowed masters to put their slaves to death; to extort testimony

on the rack ; to punish them with dreadful tortures ; to turn out the old slaves to die on a dunghill, &c. Might the Christian master claim and exercise all these legal rights ? The Roman law said, *Inter servos et liberos matrimonium contrahi non potest, contubernium potest*. A freeman may live with a slave, but not marry her. Was this legal fornication tolerated in the church ? He might have gone further, and said that the Roman law recognised no marriage between slaves, and then ask, whether the apostles recognised this prohibition of matrimony ? If we understand this argument, it is, that if the apostles recognised the right of a Christian under the Roman laws to hold slaves, they thereby recognised his right to expose his slaves to die of cold and hunger, to torture them at pleasure, to forbid them to marry, or to regard their union as mere temporary concubinage. If this is a valid mode of reasoning, then the Bible, in recognising the right of kings to reign, recognised their right to throw good men to lions, or into a furnace, to persecute them for worshipping the true God, and to do all the abominable things human laws have ever permitted kings to do. Then, too, if the Bible recognises the parental relation, it recognises the right of the parent to sell his daughters as concubines, to put his children to death, or to do whatever the laws of Mohammedans or Pagans may authorize a parent's doing. One would think that the distinction between the lawfulness of a given relation, as between a king and his subjects, a parent and his children, a master and his slaves, and the laws which at any particular time or place may be enacted in reference to that relation, is sufficiently clear, to prevent the two things from being confounded. Yet this is a distinction that abolitionists will not make. When they speak of slaveholding as a sin, they mean that it is a sin to do what the slave-laws of the south permit to be done ; to separate parents and children, or husbands and wives ; to treat slaves with injustice and cruelty ; to prevent their learning to read the word of God, or attending the preaching of the gospel. And when any man asserts that slaveholding is not a crime, they consider him as saying that it is not a sin thus to trample on the dearest rights of our fellow men. The very title of the book to which we have so often referred, is, "A Review of Dr. Junkin's Synodical Speech in defence of American Slavery." Dr. Junkin's speech, however, is simply an argument to prove that slaveholding is not a crime, and therefore that "believing masters ought not to be excommunicated from the church of God." This is called a defence of American Slavery ! i. e. of the whole system of slave-laws now in force in this country ! There is no help for men who will act thus. May not a man in England maintain that landholding is no sin, without defending all the English laws of entail and primogeniture, which relate to lands ? May he not teach that it is right to hold property, without thereby teaching that all the laws relating to property, in any given country, are wise and just ? Then why may he not say, that slaveholding is no crime, and yet not defend the slave-laws

either of Rome or America? This distinction, which is so plain as to be glaring, it is of great importance should be borne in mind both in the North and South. In the North, to prevent the sin and folly of condemning all slaveholders as criminals, when the slave laws are the real objects meant to be condemned; and in the South, to prevent those who maintain that slaveholding is no sin, from thinking it necessary to defend, and from expecting others to defend the existing laws in relation to that subject.

We utterly repudiate the charge that we are the advocates of the slave-laws of the South, because we hold that slaveholding is not in itself a crime. We deny that such a charge is sustained by anything we have said; we deny that southern Christians even defend the laws which are now in force with regard to the slaves. We know, for example, that the law which forbids slaves being taught to read, is in a multitude of cases openly disregarded. Within ten days a gentleman from South Carolina told us that every slave that he had could both read and write, and that he never gave himself the least concern about the law which forbids the instruction of the blacks. To show how unreasonable is the clamour of abolitionists against those who oppose their distinctive doctrine, we will again briefly state what we conceive to be the correct view of the subject.

By slaveholding we understand one man's having the right of property in another man; and by the right of property we understand the right of having and using a thing according to its nature; and consequently the right of property in a man can be nothing more than the right to use him as a man. And as a man is not only a sentient creature, but a social, rational, moral and immortal being, it is not an incident of the right of property in him, that his wants as a social and rational being can be justly disregarded, any more than it is an incident of right of property in a horse, that the wants of the horse as a living animal can be justly neglected. On the contrary, as the possession of rights implies corresponding duties, the possession of property in a man imposes the responsibility of providing for his wants as a man. And as the wants of a man relate to the soul as well as to the body, the responsibility not only rests upon the owner, but arises out of the very nature of his relation to his slaves as their owner, to provide not merely for their comfortable support, but also for their education, for the secure exercise of their social affections as husbands and fathers; and for their moral and religious instruction. These are as plainly the incidents of the right of property in man, as the duty of support, education, and moral and religious culture, is an incident of a parent's relation to his children. So far, therefore, from maintaining that a master has a right in virtue of his ownership to prevent his slaves marrying, or to separate them when married, or to keep them in ignorance, or to debar them from the means of grace, we say that it of necessity flows from his right of property in them, that he has no right to do any of these things, but is bound to do

the direct reverse. It is here as in despotic governments. So far from the possession by one man of absolute power in the state, giving him the right to interfere with the religious convictions of his people, to keep them in ignorance, to separate the married, to take children from their parents, or in any way to hinder the social, intellectual, and religious improvement of those subject to his power, the very possession of that power imposes the strongest obligation to do all he can for their happiness and improvement.

Again, as the possession of power over our fellow-men necessarily involves corresponding duties towards them, so the exercise of that power is to be regulated by the law of God. A king is bound to exercise his power according to the rules of justice and mercy; a parent must use his authority for edification and not for destruction; and a master's power over the slave is in like manner subject to the rules of God's word. And as it is one of the rules there laid down, that labour should be rewarded, it is no fair inference from the admission of the right of possession in the master, that he may justly withhold a reasonable compensation for the labour of his slaves. And in point of fact, we believe it to be true, that the slaves of the south, as a general rule, are far better compensated than the great body of operatives in Europe. We believe also that taking them as a class, their intellectual, moral, and religious condition is better. It is not well, however, to recriminate. Americans doubtless have sinned and are now sinning greatly, in not discharging the duties which flow from their relation to the coloured people of this country as their masters; and this sin is not the less, because England has sinned and is still sinning in a higher measure, in her conduct towards her labouring population. The degradation, social and moral, into which large masses of the people have there been allowed to sink, we cannot but regard as the natural consequence of unequal laws; of laws which favour the accumulation of property in the hands of a few, and which tend to confine the benefits of education and religious privileges to the upper and middle classes. The Archbishop of Canterbury stated in the House of Lords, that there were three millions of people in England and Wales without pastoral supervision, and that church accommodation was provided for one in eight of the population, in some parts of the country, and for one in thirty in other parts. The Marquis of Lansdowne, on another occasion, stated that, with the exception of Spain and Russia, England was in education below any European nation, only one in twelve of the population being in school. A public report recently made to parliament, states that there are nearly three millions and a half of the people of Ireland living in mud hovels, having one room each, and without chimney or windows. While the mass of the population is sinking to such degradation, property is accumulating with fearful rapidity in the hands of a constantly decreasing number. In 1770 the lands of England belonged to 250,000 families; in 1815, they belonged to

32,000, and since then the process has been going on as rapidly as ever.\* In 1626 it appeared from the probate of wills that the personal property of twenty-four bishops, who had died within twenty years, averaged about 3000,000 each. This is exclusive of their real estates. If the eye had the power of retroversion, we should certainly be less censorious. The laws of England by which such inequality has been produced in the distribution of wealth, and such ignorance and misery entailed on the lower classes, are to Americans as much the objects of moral disapprobation, as anything in our institutions can be to the good people of England. And yet we hear of no public meetings to recommend discontinuing the use of the products of English labour, analogous to those which in Great Britain recommend, under the patronage of that very eccentric person Dr. Burns, the non-importation of American cotton. This however is a digression which we should be willing to strike out, but are also willing to let stand. We do not approve of this mutual condemnation, and only adduce the foregoing facts to show how unbecoming it appears in the eyes of Americans, for men surrounded by such crying evils at home, to exhaust their benevolence on distant objects.

As, then, the right of property in a man, while it invests the owner with power to command his services, does not exempt him from the obligation to exercise that power according to the directions of God's word, the master therefore is bound by the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire. And the right to accumulate property necessarily follows from the right to compensation, for a man's hire is his own, and if it exceeds the necessary means of support, it is his own still. This right is generally recognised. How else could slaves purchase their own liberty, as they are allowed to do under Spanish laws, and as they so often in fact do in this country?

It follows necessarily, from what has been said, that all those laws which are designed to restrict the master in the discharge of the duties which flow from his relation to his slaves; which forbid his teaching them to read, or which prohibit marriage among them, or which allow of the separation of those who are married, or which render insecure the possession of their earnings, or are otherwise in conflict with the word of God, are wicked laws; laws which do not find their justification in the admission of the right of ownership in the master, but are in direct contravention of the obligations which necessarily flow from that right. If the laws of the land forbade parents to instruct their children, or permitted them to sell them to the Turks, there would be a general outcry against the atrocity of such laws; but no man would be so absurd as to infer that having children was a great sin. Parents who complied with such laws would be great sinners, but not parents who did their duty to their children. In all other cases,

\* Edinburgh Witness, Feb. 3, 1844.

men distinguish between the relation, whether of kings and subjects, of lords and tenants, of parents and children, and the laws, just or unjust, which may be made respecting those relations. If they would make the same distinction between slaveholding and the slave-laws, they would see that the condemnation of the latter does not necessarily involve the condemnation of the former as itself a crime.

The principles above stated we believe to be scriptural, and in accordance with the enlightened moral sense of men. We believe them also to be eminently conducive to the welfare of the slaves. The principles and conduct, on the other hand, of our abolitionists, we believe to be unchristian and in the highest degree injurious. If their distinctive doctrine is erroneous, then denouncing slaveholders as such, excluding them from the church, insisting on immediate emancipation as in all cases a duty, are all seen and felt to be unreasonable; and the spirit with which this course is pursued, to be unchristian. The consequence is, that opposition and alienation are produced between those who ought to be united; slaveholders, who do not belong to the church, are exasperated, and become more severe in the treatment of their slaves, more intolerant of all means for their improvement, and the hands of God's people living among them are effectually tied. As the cause of temperance was disparaged, weakened, and in some places ruined, by making all use of intoxicating drinks sinful; so the cause of the slave has been injured beyond estimate, by the doctrine that slaveholding is itself a crime, and by the spirit and measures to which that doctrine has given rise.

Any candid man can see, on the other hand, that the scriptural doctrine is adapted to promote the best interests of the slaves. That doctrine is that slaveholding is not necessarily sinful, but like all similar relations is right or wrong according to circumstances, and when it exists gives rise to the obligation of providing for all the temporal and spiritual wants of the slaves. If a man owns another, he is for that very reason bound to feed and clothe him, to provide for him in sickness and old age, to educate him, and let the light of truth and saving knowledge in upon his mind, to watch over his rights, to exercise all the power which his ownership gives him in accordance with those rules of mercy and righteousness, which are laid down in the word of God. It is also evident that acting in accordance with these principles would soon so improve the condition of the slaves, would make them intelligent, moral and religious, and thus work out to the benefit of all concerned, and the removal of the institution. For slavery, like despotism, supposes the actual inferiority, and consequent dependence of those held in subjection. Neither can be permanent. Both may be prolonged by keeping the subject class degraded, that is, by committing sin on a large scale, which is only to treasure up wrath for the day of wrath. It is only the antagonist fanaticism of a fragment of the south, which maintains the doctrine that

slavery is in itself a good thing, and ought to be perpetuated. It cannot by possibility be perpetuated. The only question is, how is it to end? All that we are concerned with, is present duty; and that duty, inferred from the nature of the relation, and declared in the word of God, is to instruct, to civilize, to evangelize the slaves, to make them as far as we can, intelligent, moral and religious; good husbands, good fathers, as well as good servants. The consequence of such conduct must be peace, a good conscience, and the blessing of God.

If the views presented in this paper are correct, it is easy to see how this whole subject ought to be treated in our church courts. In the first place it is plain, that for such courts, under the dictation of abolitionists, to pronounce slaveholding a crime, and to enjoin the exclusion of all slaveholders from the church, would be foolish and wicked. It would be to trample on the authority of the word of God; to shock the moral sense of the great body of intelligent and pious people on the face of the earth; it would rend the church, send abroad a spirit of malice and discord, and would cut off the slaves themselves from one of the most important means appointed by God for their improvement and emancipation; the instructions and kind treatment of believing masters.

In the second place, it is plain that the church has no responsibility and no right to interfere, with respect to the slave laws of the South. Those laws are doubtless in many cases unjust and cruel, enjoining what God forbids, and forbidding what God enjoins. The existence of those laws supposes criminality somewhere; but the responsibility rests on those who made, and have the power to repeal them. It does not rest on the church. Christians who are members of communities in which such laws are in force, have their share of responsibility with regard to them, as citizens. But it is no part of the vocation of the church, as such, to interfere with civil laws. The apostles did not call a synod at Jerusalem, to denounce the Roman laws, but they laid the foundation of a spiritual society, and let the world make its own laws. We would not brook the legislatures of our States passing denunciatory resolutions against our rules of church discipline; and we should not call upon the church to meddle with the laws of the land. As citizens we have the right and duty to demand just and equal laws; but as a church, we have other and higher duties.

In the third place, it is evident that the church has an important duty to perform in relation to this subject. At the North, as elsewhere, she is bound to instruct parents in their duties to their children, and to exercise her oversight and discipline when those duties are grossly violated or neglected. She has the same duty to perform with regard to slaveholders. As she would be called upon to censure a parent, who was unjust or cruel to his children, so is she called upon to censure her slaveholding members, should they be unjust or cruel to their slaves. The church is a society constituted by God, to be governed by certain rules, and invested

with power to enforce, by spiritual means, the observance of those rules upon its members. Of course those who do not comply with the rules laid down in the word of God, as to their conduct, either as men, or parents, or masters, are justly exposed to the censure of the church, and the church is bound to inflict such censure. As to this point, we presume there is no difference of opinion. And if we could agree to act on these principles; that is, abstain from denouncing as a crime what God has not so pronounced; withhold our hands from the laws of the land, for which, as a church, we have no responsibility; and confine ourselves to teaching all classes of our members their duties, whether as parents, masters, or slaves, and enforcing the discharge of those duties by the power which God hath given to his church for edification and not for destruction, we should commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.